March 1986

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Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

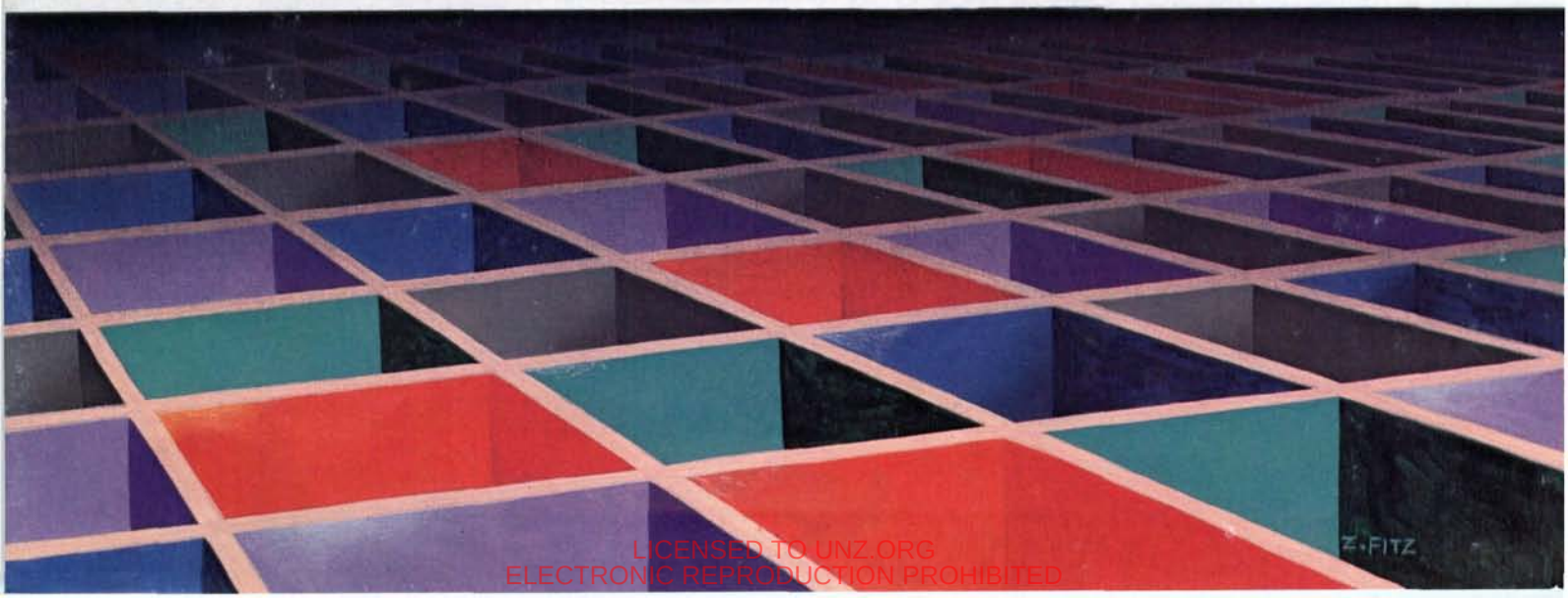
COUNTING THE WAYS

. . . the World, the Flesh, and the Social Sciences

Robert Nisbet on the Uses of Tradition

John S. Reed on Survey Sociology

Irving Louis Horowitz on the Doctors and the Bomb



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Bureaucratic Absurdity Quiz

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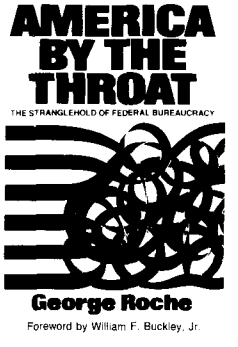
1. _____ spent $_____ studying stewardesses and determined that their noses average 2.18 inches long.
2. The Pentagon spends $_____ to make a grilled cheese sandwich.
3. The FDA issued an urgent warning about valentine candies. What was the thrust of this emergency declaration?
4. How much would environmental testing of a zero-gravity toilet cost?
5. What would a complete study of frisbees cost, roughly?
6. On April 29, 1981, an ordinary day in the bureaucracy, the U.S. government spent $_____ for goggles.
7. Name the august body that voted unanimously to prohibit the importation of killer bee semen. (Problem, points out Roche: no one knows how to obtain killer bee semen.)
8. Not counting the military arm, what is the cost of the federal bureaucracy, annually, per person in the U.S.?

AMERICA BY THE THROAT
The Stranglehold of Federal Bureaucracy

by

George Roche

President, Hillsdale College
Former Chairman,
National Council on Educational Research



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America by the Throat is part of Hillsdale College's defense of independence and the liberal arts tradition. Dr. Roche and Hillsdale are committed to providing intellectual leadership through the College's curriculum, the Center for Constructive Alternatives, and the Shavano Institute for National Leadership.

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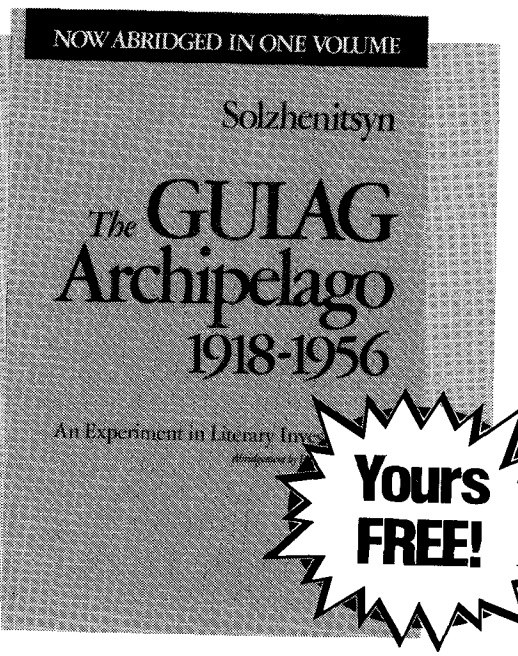

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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COUNTING THE WAYS

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Freud was a man. So was Jung. So were Adler and Sullivan, to say nothing of Rollo May and Carl Rogers. Perhaps that explains why psychiatrists and feminists are at odds over how to define the mentally ill. In 1983 the American Psychiatric Association commissioned a special Work Group to update and revise the Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III), the official catalog of recognized forms of mental illness. A preliminary draft of the revised manual (DSM-III-R) is now out, and, according to National Public Radio, leading feminists don't like it.

One of the offending recommendations in DSM-III-R is the proposal that Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder be recognized as a new category of mental illness. The working draft is careful to point out that for most women their natural cycles cause "little distress and . . . no effect on social or occupational functioning" and that Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder was to be diagnosed only in cases of "clinically significant emotional and behavioral symptoms" that include "marked distress or marked impairment in social or occupational functioning" and only when such symptoms persist "during a majority of menstrual cycles in the past year." Still, feminists are enraged by the very idea that women *qua* women are subject to a mental affliction from which men are exempt.

Feminists are likewise up in arms over the recommendation that a "Masochistic Personality Disorder" be recognized in the case of an individual filled with "feelings of martyrdom" and inclined to voluntarily remain "in relationships in which others exploit, abuse, or take advantage of him or her." Such a diagnostic syndrome is unacceptable to feminists, who feel that it will be used against women abused and victimized by their husbands or lovers.

In a telephone conversation with *Chronicles* recently, John Blamphin, Director of Public Relations for the American Psychiatric Association, expressed surprise at the attacks on the proposed new manual, especially since the APA Work Group had already met with concerned women's groups, heard their complaints, and "agreed with many of them." Blamphin did say, however, that feminists had been "very strong in opposition" to the proposed revisions all along and have even threatened legal action against the APA if the proposed revisions are accepted. To many observers, such coercive tactics suggest paranoiac or even authoritarian personalities.

But feminists aren't the only ones who want to influence the rewriting of DSM-III. In the same sort of crazy alliance inspired by the war against pornography, traditional Christians are joining feminists in protesting the recognition of "Paraphilic Rapism" as a mental illness characterized by "acts, fantasies, or other stimuli involving coercing or forcing a non-consenting person to engage in oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse." Christians insist that this is not mental illness but sin; feminists prefer to label it a crime or a violation of rights. In response to objections, the APA has apparently decided on "dropping the term 'rapism' and reformulation of the criteria to be made under the title of Paraphilic Coercive Disorder."

Also applying strong pressure to those revising DSM-III are homosexual groups angered that the 1980 edition defined as mentally ill any person who "complains that heterosexual arousal is persistently absent or weak" or who experiences "homosexual arousal" as "a persistent source of distress." (DSM-III does *not* stigmatize those who are cheerful and uncomplaining homosexuals.) The gay rights crowd has not yet succeeded in removing "Ego-dystonic Homosexuality" from the catalog of psychiatric illnesses, but they have apparently persuaded the APA to add "a stronger statement about the controversial nature of the diagnosis."

The APA hopes that the new manual (to be published in early 1987) will reflect all "scientific data" now available. Yet at a meeting last December, the APA held open the possibility that before final publication of DSM-III-R the Work Group might "determine that although adequate scientific support for inclusion [of some revisions] existed, other implications were so overriding that inclusion would not be appropriate at this time." The unnamed "other implications" are no doubt the strong political pressures of feminists, homosexuals, and others determined to stamp their own agenda on the official list of mental illnesses.

DSM-III-R raises another serious question about psychiatry. On the one hand, the manual lists clearly documentable disorders, whose symptoms and causes have a physiological base and are therefore medically treatable. On the other hand, the APA is adding to the list of neuroses, for which symptoms are vague and treatment a matter of taste. Thomas Szasz has become *persona non grata* by pointing out how much money is spent on studying and treating middle-class "blues" under fancy names and how little is spent on actual mental illnesses like schizophrenia. (Is it possible that the disparity is explained by the fact that neurotics often have wealth and power while psychotics are just plain sick?) The future for serious psychiatrists clearly lies in medicine—they *are* M.D.'s—rather than in psychoanalytic voodoo. As long as psychiatrists devote themselves to the anxieties of the rich and famous, they will be subject to the whims of pressure groups.

The Soviets are ahead of us in discovering the political power available to those who can define mental health. To the degree that the United States also becomes an ideological state, American psychiatrists will wield more and more power as our true legislators, judges, and policemen. Who knows? Before long, smart PAC's may discover that dominance in the halls of Congress is far less decisive than control over the gates of Bedlam.

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The German Marshall Fund of the United States was established by the Bundestag in 1972 as an expression of gratitude for the Marshall Plan. Its mission, never very clearly articulated, was to support comparative study of problems in industrialized nations, international affairs, and European studies. The Fund has received criticism, from time to time, for the trendiness of its commissions, but it retains the solid backing of most German political parties interested in developing better relations with the U.S. Most Americans have probably only heard the name among the credits at the end of National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*. It's a curious way to repay an old debt—by subsidizing the most consistently anti-American news program this side of Radio Havana. On the other hand, the Fund was the brainchild of Willy Brandt. Perhaps it was simply a cog in the wheel of his *Ostpolitik* designed to conciliate the Soviets. In that case, the Fund's annual budget of 10 million marks is a good investment. At least it's not *our* money. cc

State funding for the arts is stirring controversy once again—this time north of the border. Two years ago, Canada's Progressive Conservatives announced a C$3.5 million cut in the base budget for the Canada Council, the country's federal arts agency. Canadian arts organizations, who depend upon the government for over a third of their income, immediately went into action, staging public rallies, pleading their case in television and newspaper interviews, and twisting legislative arms. The effort paid off: the arts budget was reduced a mere 1 percent (C$570,000), and the triumphant artists could go back to their voluntary servitude as government employees.

But the war wasn't over. Last year the Canadian Conservatives sacked Timothy Porteous, director of the Canada Council. Porteous left office accusing the Tories of undermining "the long-established tradition of arts funding in Canada" and of allowing "political criteria" to taint its grants policies. Porteous' complaint was echoed by Curtis Barlow, executive director of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres. "I think," Barlow said, "that . . . the arm's length principle is clearly under attack."

It is a strange world, when reducing artists' dependence upon government grants is equated with "politicizing" the arts. What they really mean by politics is public opinion, a power routinely despised by artists. But it is not just artists. Every "minority" wants to protect its interests from public scrutiny. Last year, blind activists insisted that blind people have a *right* to tax-subsidize braille editions of *Playboy* and that taxpayers were obligated to provide it, regardless of their moral scruples. The "politicizing" of the arts represents nothing more sinister than the effort by some elected officials to prevent tax dollars from paying for "artistic" assaults upon their constituents' beliefs. The predictable reaction is moral outrage.

Recently John Brademas, president of New York University, criticized the Reagan Administration for "mounting an assault on the National Arts Endowment and other programs to support the arts." Formerly a congressman and a principal sponsor of the legislation creating NEA, Brademas complains that Reagan observed the 20th anniversary of the NEA last year by trying to slash its budget. But has our national culture really been enriched over the past two decades by the costly support the Federal government has given the arts? In his provocative study *The Democratic Muse* (Basic, 1984), Edward Banfield suggests that it has not, as he documents the "disheartening" track record: millions spent on "art therapists" who try to cure criminality and lunacy with watercolors and ceramics, on employing otherwise unemployable "artists" who have the right friends and use the correct vocabulary, on alieviating "cultural deprivation" by putting bored slum dwellers through "art sensitivity" sessions. Banfield cites grants given to artists for trying to "manipulate the Chicago skyline for the period of one year," for "dripping ink from Hayley, Idaho, to Cody, Wyoming . . . commemorating the birthplaces of Ezra Pound and Jackson Pollock," and for dozens of other burlesques. Almost every major university now has a tax-supported "artist-in-residence" who can get almost no one but his captive students to read his books or look at his paintings, and almost every major city now has some huge piece of "modern sculpture," an eyesore resented by most of the citizens whose taxes paid for it. Much of a recent NEA grant to a San Francisco mime troupe went to "providing health benefits." Heaven knows, mimes in San Francisco have every reason to be worried about their health.

But beyond the manifest weakening of aesthetic standards and the open encouragement to insults to public taste, tax support for the arts inevitably turns potential artists into full-time lobbyists. Curtis Barlow admits that in recent years "political awareness has dominated [the] agenda" among Canadian dramatists worried about government funding. In California, where a "Multi-Cultural Advisory Panel" has just been set up to oversee an ambitious affirmative action arts program, we hear little discussion of art and a great deal about the politics of special and ethnic interests. A Hispanic "graphic artist" argues that the panel's main responsibility is to "achieve parity" for minorities, "and our efforts should be concentrated on that goal." Another panelist, a "taiko drummer," wants a "more equal balance of the money given to the geographic areas, disciplines, and to minority artists." A third panelist, a dancer, insists that Black American, Pan Asian, and Chicano artists "will not be exploited, but we must share equitably in disbursement of public funds." Curiously, in their explanation of the panelists' qualifications, the California Arts Council's *State of the Arts* referred repeatedly to their "community activism" and "political activism" of the minority panelists. In *these* cases, politicizing the arts is apparently laudable. In any event, we are confident that with a large, dark room and enough long knives, the California Arts Council can devise a subsidy-distribution plan that will satisfy all of its contending artists, minority activists, and "art facilitators." They could film the entire meeting as a study in violence, maybe even get a grant. . . . cc

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SUCCESSFUL CRIMES

Crime is big business in the U.S. It is bigger than the billions of dollars that are made in the drug traffic every year and the astronomical revenues from prostitution, gambling, and armed robbery. (Robbers alone are estimated to cost us $355 thousand a day.) Even honest citizens get a piece of the action: law enforcement professionals, judges and lawyers, criminologists, and building contractors eager to satisfy the demand for new prison construction—where would they all be if we all suddenly started behaving ourselves?

Even after they retire from business, some criminals continue to profit from their career. The *Chicago Tribune* recently disclosed that Aladena Fratianno has received more than $662,000 from the Federal government as reimbursement for testimony against his former colleagues. Last year, he had the effrontery to complain that he had lost money on the deal, but Fratianno has already recouped his losses by coauthoring a best-seller on—what else?—organized crime. As Dryden observed in a somewhat different context, "Successful crimes alone are justified."

Until recently, the only class getting nothing out of the business were the ordinary Americans who are the victims of crime. In the past few years, however, 35 states have established victims' compensation programs. Most of them provide some form of reimbursement for medical expenses or lost property. Several have followed New York's lead in passing so-called Son of Sam laws. Named in honor of serial murderer David Berkowitz, who signed his notes "Son of Sam," these statutes make it impossible for criminals to make money on books or movies describing their illegal activities. Such laws are endorsed by the President's task force on victims of crime.

It is hard not to sympathize with the plight of crime victims, especially since the poor are the most frequent targets of violent crimes. But before we commit ourselves as a nation to the general principle of victims' compensation, we ought to be clear about where we are headed.

One question almost no one seems to be asking is, Who's going to pay? If a criminal is caught and convicted, he ought to be made to shoulder the burden—if he can. But few muggers or rapists are members of the New York Stock Exchange. Crimes of violence are not only committed against the poor, they are committed *by* the poor, the uneducated, and the unemployed. In some cases it is possible to set up a work-release program in which a convicted felon surrenders part of his earnings to his victim—or rather victims, since street criminals are rarely one-time offenders. But it is unreasonable to suppose that more than a tiny fraction of victims will ever benefit from such a program.

In fact, it is the taxpayers who will end up underwriting the costs of any compensation program. Like anything the government does undertake, it will end up costing far more than the money actually paid out to victims. As Robert Woodson, president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, has shown, most of the Federal money allocated for victims' restitution ends up in the pockets of professionals in the form of salaries and expenses. Like many worthy ideas, victims' compensation will require costly programs. Few state legislatures are currently disposed to mandate new programs that will result in higher taxes. Predictably, there has been a call for Federal subsidy to the states. But if Vermonters and Nebraskans are rejecting higher taxes at the state level, why do we imagine they are willing to swallow higher Federal income taxes? Even congressmen have begun to realize they can't fool all of the people all of the time, however hard they try.

The Son of Sam laws have the virtue of costing next to nothing. If a criminal does write a successful book, then the proceeds will go to the victims. But there is a serious danger in these laws. Traditionally, an author has held "intellectual property rights" in his creation. If a book makes money, he is entitled to a share of the profits. In our desire to punish the guilty, we should not let animosity blind us to the serious constitutional question at stake. The idea of private property is far older than our Constitution, older even than the common law tradition that underlies the American legal system. Are we ready to declare that there are some classes of citizens who can be deprived of fundamental rights?

Convicted criminals do give up certain rights when they enter prison, but once they have "paid their debt to society," they are free to enjoy the full rights of American citizenship. How can we impose a permanent disability on any citizen, and if we do, who can be entrusted with such power? What is an even more serious question, where do we draw the line? Some criminal activities involve politics. Perhaps we should include members and former members of the Communist Party and the Ku Klux Klan, the Watergate burglars, and anyone who burned a flag in 1968.

If communities want to ban the publication and distribution of books they find offensive, that is one thing. It's called censorship, and it is something we have always done and, perhaps, ought to do more of. But we don't have the stomach for that, or so it seems. Instead we want to go around to the back door and undermine a basic foundation of our civil liberties, all because of our deep sympathy for the victims.

Our response to violent crime is symptomatic of a mentality that can be traced at best to the beginning of this century. We have it in our heads that crime and vice and

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sin are "social problems," demanding solution. But before the problems can be solved, they must first be studied —scientifically, no less—by psychologists, sociologists, criminologists, and urbanologists. We used to be told there was something called a criminal personality. Psychologists termed him psychopath, sociologists preferred sociopath. In any event, it was reassuring to know the experts had a handle on things. All they had to do was administer the right therapy—or lock him away from decent people—and we would be all right.

It took a later generation to discover the real root causes of crime. It wasn't the old Adam in us or Hobbes's state of nature; it wasn't even a low forehead or deviant genes: it was poverty, discrimination, indifference; it was, in a word, society. We could hardly expect to control the criminal elements until we had figured out a way of reforming the whole of society. Recently, the pendulum has swung back in the direction of psychology. James O. Wilson is reviving the old notion of a criminal personality. To his credit, Wilson no longer believes that criminals can be "cured" in rehabilitation centers, but neither he nor anyone else in the business is willing to give up writing articles which contribute to the illusion that social problems can be cured by professionals.

Social scientists may well have important things to say about the causes and the prevention of crime. It is not entirely their fault if the public and the public's servants are eager to make the leap from theoretical studies to government policies. The sciences, including the so-called social sciences, are generally considered to be ethically neutral. They tell us how we live, not how we ought to live. A criminologist in the service of the Saudi government might make law enforcement officers more effective in catching the right villains to decapitate or to mutilate. Only an ethical philosopher or theologian can speak with any authority on whether possession of Jim Beam should be a capital offense. But the vision of the social sciences has never been ethically or politically neutral. Whether we look at the precursors like Auguste Comte and Karl Marx or the founders like Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, and Sigmund Freud or the most celebrated social scientists of recent time—B.F. Skinner, Talcott Parsons, and Margaret Mead —they all had social and political agendas up their sleeves. Most of them couldn't wait to tell us how, with a little help from the experts, we could make our lives oh so much richer, more peaceful, more fulfilling.

By and large, we listened respectfully. Margaret Mead, despite a scandalous personal life, was treated as an authority on marriage and the family, second only to the divorced advice counselors who write for the daily papers. Parsons, on the other hand, worked to establish the bourgeois family on a firm foundation, while Skinner was constructing a utopian paradise in *Walden II*—a world made out of Platonist political theory and Stalinist science.

Scientists are citizens and have a right to their opinion, it is true. Geneticist G.B.S. Haldane was a Marxist, zoologist Konrad Lorenz was right wing. But despite their frequent faults, zoologists and physicists usually make some effort to keep their science distinct from their politics. With many social scientists, it is just the opposite: their science *is* their politics and *vice versa*. There is an outstanding exception that proves the rule: Noam Chomsky. Chomsky's leftist politics are revolting and perhaps not entirely uncorrupted (although he does not deserve the level of abuse he has received), but here's the rub—his linguistic theories fly in the face of Marxist doctrine. While doctrinaire Marxists like Jean-Paul Sartre stick to the Party line that man has no nature that determines the quality of human social life, Chomsky's chief contribution to linguistics has been the idea that our mental life is organized according to "deep structures" that constitute a universal grammar.

Why does Chomsky prove the rule? Because linguistics —at the level of theory—is more like a "hard" science than it is like a social science. Unfortunately, once Chomsky's linguistic theories trickled down to high school (and elementary) English departments, it became a thoroughly social science whose mission was the destruction of standard English. Students in the 60's and 70's no longer learned to speak and write literate English. Instead, they were taught the theory of transformational grammar. All possible English sentences were treated alike; slang was elevated to the level of dialect and dialect to language. Anyone who resisted was branded as a snob or a reactionary. The result was a whole generation of Americans who have trouble reading anything—even a soup label—written before 1960. Chomsky himself had not set out to destroy English literacy but as soon as his theories were "socialized" they were used as tools to overthrow the existing order.

What the social sciences offer to teachers and state officials is the illusion of power. While human life is in fact rich, complex, and unpredictable, the modern state desires order and control. In their search for a philosopher's stone that will transmute the base metal of humanity into the gold on which utopias are constructed, governments have turned inevitably to theories which claim to explain the mysteries of human experience. Whether the subject is crime, literacy, or poverty, the most popular theory will not be the most descriptive but the one that offers the greatest promise of control. Only the *libido dominandi* can explain the influence of behaviorism and Keynesian economics long

(continued on page 51)

FRUIT-TREE

by Roy Fuller

The apparatus draws up rain
Whence it emerges once again
Packaged conveniently within
A bright impermeable skin,
Nonetheless edible, although
Old teeth and tongues mayn't find it so.
But what could be less like a machine
Than an amorphous tower of green,
Dropping around at random these
Botched products of its processes?
—Which some fastidious birds ignore,
Thieving inside the factory store.

Roy Fuller was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1968. His volumes of verse include The Reign of Sparrows, Buff, Brutus's Orchard, Counterparts, *and* Epitaphs and Occasions.

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Before the Big Bang *by Bryce Christensen*

"Oh hide the God still more!"

—Alexander Pope

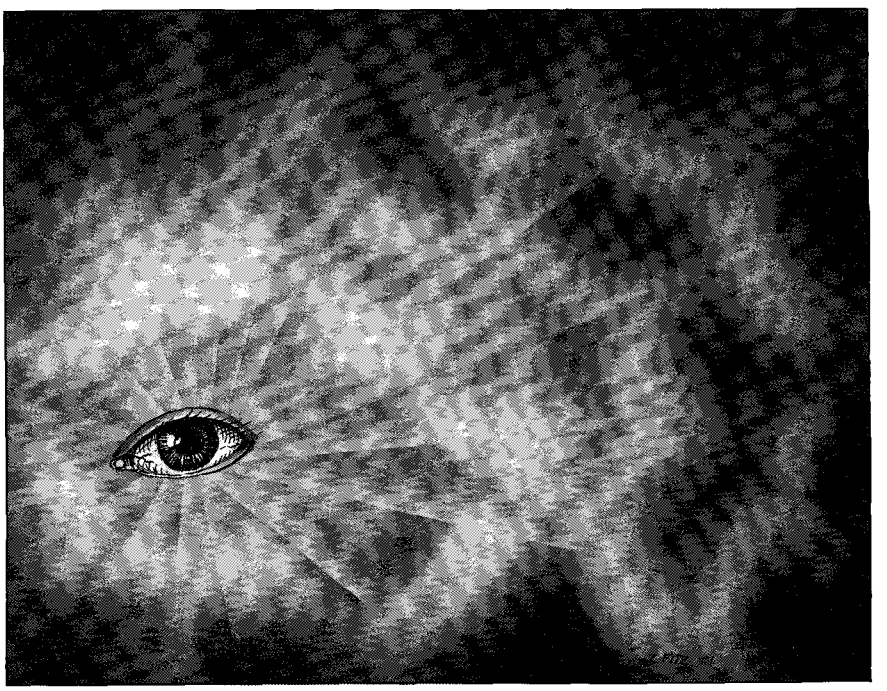
Paul Davies: *Superforce: The Search for a Grand Unified Theory of Nature*; Simon and Schuster; New York; $16.95.

Christine Sutton: *The Particle Connection: The Most Exciting Scientific Chase Since DNA and the Double Helix*; Simon and Schuster; New York; $16.95.

Henry H. Bauer: *Beyond Velikovsky: The History of a Public Controversy*; University of Illinois Press; Urbana; $21.95.

These days orthodox Christians and skeptical physicists disagree over nothing—yet their disagreement is literally of the first importance. For the "nothing" that is at issue is the void that immediately preceded the Big Bang, the cosmic explosion 15 billion years ago in which the universe began. When first formulated almost 40 years ago by George Gamow, the Big Bang Theory tipped the philosophical scales decidedly in the direction of traditional Christians. After all, before then no one except Christians had believed that the physical universe appeared suddenly from nothing. Previously scientists generally had believed, as did the ancient Greeks, that the universe had always existed in some essentially stable form.

Of course, a few Christians have not subscribed to creation *ex nihilo* (John Milton, for instance, rejected it), and even those who have accepted it have confronted perplexities not resolved by Professor Gamow (Augustine admitted the difficulty of answering the heretic who wished to know what God did *before* He made heaven and earth). Still, the new theory vexed modern pagans. Precisely because of metaphysical considerations, many scientists clung fideistically to a steady-state model of the expanding universe long after A.A. Penzias and R.W. Wilson discovered strong evidence—a thermal "echo"—of the Big Bang. Some materialists were especially distressed by the further discovery that a universe with galaxies, heavy elements, and life possibilities evidently required a precisely engineered Big Bang. Accounting for the oddly precise variables of these Initial Conditions was embarrassing for almost everyone but believers.



But new scientific breakthroughs are shifting the terms of the science-religion debate once again. Indeed, in *Superforce* British physicist Paul Davies outlines a Grand Unified Theory (GUT) now being formulated by leading theorists that can explain the entire universe by applying quantum mechanics to an initial "false vacuum." As this strangely energized and unstable void decayed, the infant cosmos felt a fleeting pulse of "supergravity," a potent repellant force not operative since the first microseconds of time and space. Davies and his colleagues are now confident that all extant matter and physical forces can now be defined as "fossils" of this "superforce." And Davies is overjoyed that it is finally possible to dispense with "the theological concept of creation *ex nihilo*" and regard the world simply as "a consequence of the laws of physics, without the need to assume that the universe was set up in a very special state initially." In a feat of one-upmanship, Davies argues for a creation not only *ex nihilo* but *ab nihilo*,

Bryce Christensen is associate editor of Chronicles.

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out of nothing and *by* nothing.

Assessing the new theory, however, requires not only careful study of its specific features, but a correct understanding of the nature of science itself. One of the most popular misconceptions of science is the notion that scientific theories are based entirely on observable fact. This empiricist fallacy is traceable all the way back to Francis Bacon, the first of a long line of publicists who have championed science without understanding how it was done. At times scientists themselves fall into the empiricist error when explaining their work. Both the empiricist error and its implicit refutation are found in Christine Sutton's history of the recent discovery in Germany of the constituents of a new form of light.

Sutton, another British physicist, argues that unlike the philosophers of ancient Greece, who relied on their minds and their imaginations for explanations of nature, modern physicists have "an altogether different attitude." "Experiment," she writes, "is the exploratory tool. . . . In each and every case experimental data have provided the scaffold upon which the edifice of theory is built." It is hard to take Sutton's empiricist assertions seriously, however, since much of her own book describes experiments designed to *test* theoretical conjectures born of nothing but an intellectual craving for simplicity and order. The denouement of *The Particle Connection*—the discovery of the "W" and "Z" particles—was in fact predicted by those who believed, *a priori*, that electromagnetism and nuclear weak forces share a unitary root. For all of the advances in technology and mathematics, today's leading scientists still resonate to the themes of Thales and Pythagoras.

Despite the promise of its subtitle, most readers will find little exciting in Sutton's tediously detailed but philosophically naive work. (Fortunately, Davies discusses all the major experiments Sutton describes, but with far greater clarity and insight. Why Simon and Schuster published *both* books simultaneously is a mystery—unless they have feminist acquisition editors.) For all of her technical expertise, Sutton is quite mistaken in her notion that the best theories in physics are "rooted in general principles forced upon us by the way that nature really is." The truth is that physicists are not "forced" to their theories by any array of natural facts but are guided by a legacy of nonempirical philosophical choices.

An Azande witchdoctor, no less than a particle physicist, has his own set of general principles for explaining "the way nature really is," and it is unlikely that Sutton could show him any experiment or calculation that would dissuade him from his views. An Azande could interpret every cloud-chamber image, every radioactive glow, by invoking his own mythology of spirits and demons.

Occultist explanations might well contain a germ of truth, but they are not science: they provide no basis for quantifying present observations nor for predicting future phenomena. Science not only makes such predictions but seeks to do so on the basis of principles consonant with the established theories used with other types of phenomena. The current attempt to bring the entire universe and all of its apparently disparate forces—subatomic and macroscopic—within one unifying mathematical paradigm brings us to the very acme of Western science.

Because of the cultural prestige accorded scientists since the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century, and because relatively few people really understand the mathematical principles and unitary rigor informing science, "scientific" has acquired mesmerizing power in popular culture. A few schematic diagrams, a little chemical analysis, or some conjectures about the nature of the solar system is all that it takes to convince the average audience that they are in the realm of science.

Only because of such widespread confusion about the nature of science was Immanuel Velikovsky able to provoke 30 years of controversy with his idiosyncratic speculations about the history of the planets. After making a comparative study of catastrophes related in various ancient traditions, including the Old Testament, Velikovsky proposed in 1950 that the earth had twice experienced a close encounter with a comet that eventually became the planet Venus. Based on this scenario, Velikovsky made several conjectures, some of which (e.g., that Venus is hot) turned out to be correct. However, as Henry Bauer demonstrates, Velikovsky's work cannot be properly considered science because even his accurate "advance claims" were only "lonely facts." Nothing was integrated into any larger framework, nor was any account made of established paradigms. "Since we have [in Velikovsky] no satisfactory theory to account for the existence of the solar system as a whole," writes Bauer, "we are not much bothered by *any* data concerning physical conditions on the planets."

Velikovsky indeed took several events (e.g., the plagues in Egypt, the halting of the sun by Joshua) out of a meaningful but *non*scientific context and reduced them to mere props for an *ad hoc* assemblage of propositions. But even a true scientist must truncate the religious and imaginative significance of Old Testament or ancient Mayan stories when treating them scientifically. (Though "scientific creationists" usually forget this.) For, as Bauer notes, scientific truth is "a limited kind of truth" which is "useful in concrete ways [but] not a viable basis for human activity as a whole."

Primitives are not the only ones hard to persuade that scientific usefulness for making predictions is the key to reality. Oxford philosopher Leszek Kolakowski has argued that science is utilitarian and "does not deal with reality at all." Sir Isaac Newton defined gravity not only with his famous formula, but also with a little-known metaphor: God is the Piper, gravity the music. Given Newton's pair of quite different definitions—the formula and the metaphor—we must decide: Which is more fundamental? Which is transparent and which opaque? Newton's metaphor—which he coupled with the belief that angels superintended the planets—is clearly not scientific, since it was not derived mathematically and seems useless for making falsifiable predictions. Yet Newton thought it more *true* than his mathematics.

Most scientists, however, do not traffic in metaphors. Instead they share with Davies the belief that all of nature is "written in mathematical code." Few of them, however, admit with

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him that "we do not know the reason for this" and that adherence to "mathematical beauty and elegance" often constitutes "a sort of irrational faith." But why choose *this* irrational faith over other faiths—say, theosophy or Moloch-worship? Davies explains: only through mathematics are scientists able "to understand, control, and predict the outcome of physical processes."

Here then is the crux of the matter. Mathematical science is the icon of irrational preference not because its epistemological roots are necessarily deeper than those of religion or art. Rather, mathematical science is preferred because it at once satisfies an aesthetic reverence for form and fulfills a Promethean yearning for omniscience. If every power and element in the cosmos can be circumscribed within the predictable bounds of number and formulae, then man may hold the universe within his mind as an intellectual possession, a conquest. The patterns of human thinking then define the patterns of the possible, and modern scientific man may scoff at the Old Testament Deity who archly declared, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Science furnishes modern man with guarantees against the incomprehensible, with shelter from all spiritual agents, mysterious forces, and dark surprises.

No wonder Davies rejoices: "We can at last comprehend a universe free of all supernatural input, a universe that is completely the product of natural laws accessible to science." This is a long way from the spirit of Blaise Pascal, who did his mathematical and scientific work believing "It is possible to know God so long as we do not insist on understanding Him." And as comforting as Davies' ghostly materialism may be to rationalists, it does not bear close scrutiny. Quantum nihilism only partly accounts for the scandalous Initial Conditions, for we still do not know what created the "false vacuum" preceding the Big Bang. Even Bacon knew better than to search for the cause of causes. Nor can anyone yet explain how this vacuum acquired such a surcharge of energy. More fundamentally, we must ask how the laws of quantum physics got themselves "embedded" in high-power nothingness.

With laudable candor, Davies admits these are problems not yet solved. He remains hopeful, though, that a group of American theorists in Massachusetts and New York will soon supply a complete set of equations for "the cosmic bootstrap," even if this does require the repudiation of the nothing-from-nothing premise that has guided Western thought since Parmenides. Davies is optimistic, too, that if scientists remember that their formulae describe processes that produced man, they will maintain a sense of purpose in a rationalized and atheistic world. Steven Weinberg, a pioneer in GUT formulation, feels otherwise. Recently he wrote: "The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless."

Some other scientists reject godlessness in both Davies' cheerful and Weinberg's downcast versions. They believe in the new GUT's *and* God. Newton would no doubt have belonged to this group and would probably have interpreted Weinberg's equations—and any forthcoming refinements from MIT—as simply transcriptions of the first very high notes the divine Piper *chose* to play.

But to make such a Newtonian move from mathematics to metaphor means surrendering hopes for scientific omniscience. Forces not in thrall to number and beings impossible to exorcise with formulae cannot be acknowledged without undermining the theoretician's aspirations for holding the entire world in his hand. But if modern man lays aside the arrogance of explanation, what new posture can he adopt as he contemplates the galaxies? In a world of disease and natural catastrophe, it is easy to agree with the Azandes and many modern novelists in seeing nature as the mask of warring spirits indifferent or hostile to man. The Big Bang then becomes a terrifying thump in the cosmic night. But if men share with Newton the conviction that all natural forces—including "supergravity"—are manifestations of an incomprehensible goodness revealed more fully to prophets and apostles than to scientists, then they may face the loudest eruptions in the poised humility of faith. cc

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*

A House Divided

"When you're alone and afraid and feel your culture is slipping away even though you're hanging on to your memories—memories of language, of poetry, of prayers, of mathematics—hanging on with your fingernails as best you can and yet, in spite of all your efforts, still seeing the bottom of the barrel coming up to meet you and realizing how thin and fragile our veneer of culture is, when you suddenly realize the truth that we all can become animals when cast adrift and tormented for a mere matter of months, you start having some very warm thoughts about the only life preserver within reach—that human mind, that human heart next door."

—from "The 'Melting' Experience: Grow or Die"
by James Stockdale

ALSO

Russell Kirk on the perils of the new American ideology

Brian Murray on the lure of youth

William Donohue on the wrongs of rights

Fred Chappell on George Garrett and Peter Taylor

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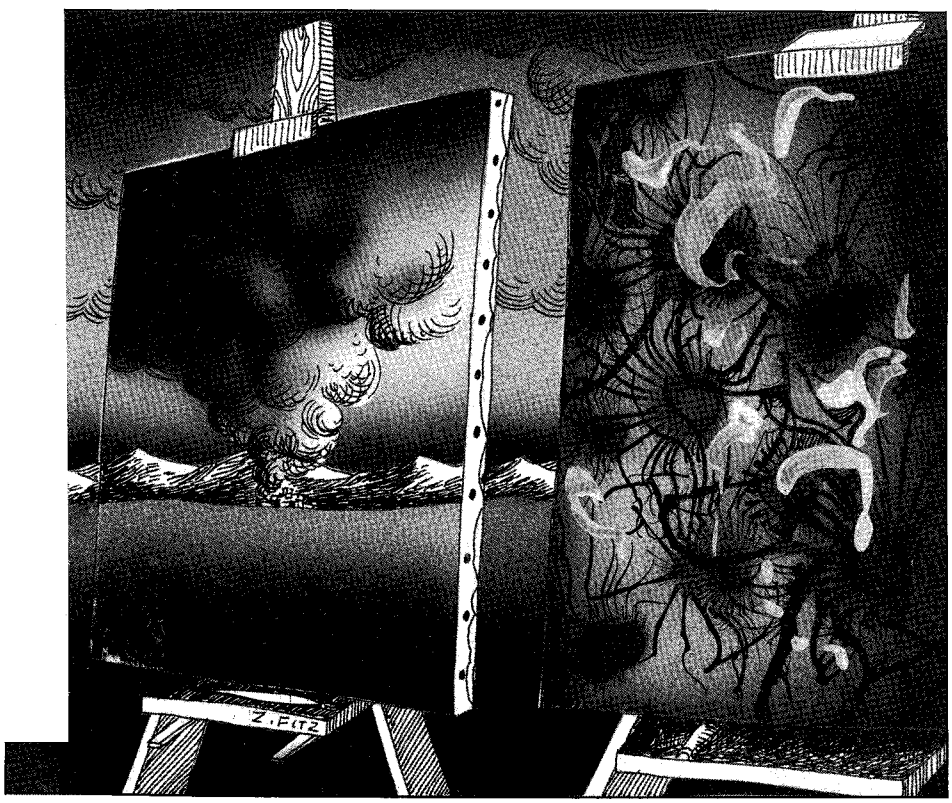
by Stephen L. Tanner

st Judgement, k Cycle Plays

ious anti-realism.
e War of the End of the World is a nal treatment of an actual event razilian history, the remarkable c resistance of the backland na- at the siege of Canudos in 1896- The energizing force behind this ance was a charismatic religious ic named Antonio Mendes Mac- known as Antonio Conselheiro Counselor), who gathered about he poor and alienated inhabitants e of the most inhospitable back- regions of the country. With his hing against the new Brazilian olic and his apocalyptic vision of lestruction of the forces of the



this current preoccupation with the force or appeal of narrative, the one demonstrating fertile abundance in variety of character and incident within the limits of realism, the other demonstrating a similar fertility in self-

Stephen Tanner is professor of English at Brigham Young University.

Anti-Christ, he welded the dispossessed into a guerrilla army that repeatedly humiliated government forces until the full resources of federal troops eventually succeeded in destroying this strange leader and his remote stronghold.

Vargas Llosa, a Peruvean, used as his principal source *Os Sertoes* by Euclides da Cunha (*Rebellion in the Backlands* is the title of the English translation). This 1901 Brazilian classic has been called "the Bible of Brazilian nationality." It is a perfect do-it-yourself kit for a novelist because in addition to narrating the events of the battles it has long and detailed chapters describing climate, geography, flora and fauna, and the racial, social, and cultural characteristics of the people, including a biography of Antonio Conselheiro, described by da Cunha as a man existing "indefinitely on the wavering frontier of madness, in that mental zone where criminals and heroes, brilliant reformers and moral defectives, meet and genius jostles degeneracy."

Another source available to Vargas Llosa but unsuited to his purposes is R.B. Cunninghame-Graham's *A Brazilian Mystic, Being the Life and Miracles of Antonio Conselheiro.* This book does not add much to da Cunha's, and as a matter of fact, Vargas Llosa makes no attempt to explore the life and personality of Conselheiro.

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One would expect a novelist to seize upon this unusual and complex personality, but in this novel the Counselor plays only a minor role. The focus is on the people he inspires and the events generated by their attachment to him.

The War of the End of the World is large and panoramic, displaying extraordinary imaginative inventiveness, the kind of fertile inventiveness demonstrated in the author's last novel, *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, but pushed to an even more ambitious level. In alternating sections our attention is drawn to dozens of characters ranging from a wealthy and worldly-wise baron to a bearded lady in a pathetic traveling circus composed of a handful of grotesques. As the battles progress, we shift back and forth to simultaneous scenes involving various combatants on both sides as well as those caught in the middle, and we move forward and backward in time for multiple perspectives on the principal events. The dust-jacket comparisons with the great historical novels of Tolstoy and Stendhal should not be taken lightly. This is obviously a stunning and significant novel.

The comparisons with large-scope historical novels of the past century, however, need qualification, and this brings me back to my initial point about contemporary preoccupation with pure narrative. Vargas Llosa has said he does not like novels with morals, and this novel certainly propounds no overt morals. Indeed it differs from those large 19th-century novels by appearing indifferent to major themes, ideas, or conclusions. The phenomenon of Antonio Conselheiro and his rebellion in the backlands poses a multitude of baffling questions. Vargas Llosa makes no attempt to answer them. His refusal as narrator to get inside the minds of the Counselor is perhaps symptomatic of his interests and approach. His objective is to provide rich, engaging, often startling narrative as an end in itself. Of course every narrative will bear to some degree the stamp of the author's character and philosophy, and one such as this that describes so many characters and incidents is bound to touch upon a variety of themes and issues. Nevertheless, the dominant motivation behind *The War of the End of the World* is story for story's sake. I'm certain that Vargas Llosa would concur with Richard Poirer's notion that "literature has only one responsibility—to be compelled and compelling about its own inventions."

José Donoso's *A House in the Country* is another impressive feat of the imagination, but a more problematic one. It is set in the backlands also, this time in an unidentified South American country. Donoso himself is a Chilean. In the novel, a wealthy family composed of seven sets of parents and 35 cousins spends its summers in a large country estate in a remote region. The house is enclosed by an iron-lace fence, which forms a barrier against a vast and encroaching prairie of thistles and against the natives—thought to be cannibals—whom the family exploits to mine gold and hammer it into fine sheets for export. Here the adults live in selfish luxury and self-deception while the children pursue their own elaborate games of incestuous intimacies, jealousies, and intrigues. When the adults leave for a picnic that lasts a day for them but a year for the children, the children's "games" are transformed into a nightmare of anarchy and destruction. The fence is torn down and children, servants, and natives engage in a bloody struggle for power.

The novel is self-consciously anti-realistic. The narrator intrudes periodically to remind us that everything is his own rather arbitrary invention. "By intruding myself from time to time in the story I simply wish to remind the reader of his distance from the material of this novel, which I would like to claim as something entirely my own, for exhibit or display, never offered for the reader to confuse with his own experience." The strategy is precisely that described by Gerald Graff in a chapter of *Literature Against Itself* titled "The Politics of Anti-Realism." Graff explains that the enemy of mimesis believes that by acknowledging the representational nature of literature we reconcile ourselves to the established order. On the other hand, by refusing to imitate nature, by rejecting the very idea of a stable "nature," literature strikes at the psychological and epistemological bases of the ruling order, which is the product of bourgeois myths.

Donoso's narrator explicitly rejects "the mimetic concept of art." Realism is unpalatable to him "because every attempt at 'realism' however unpleasant or disturbing, always meets with official approval, since in the final analysis it is useful, instructive, it points out, it condemns." He chooses the alternative of an "exaggerated artificiality" as a means of creating "an equally portentious universe: one that might similarly reach and touch and call notice to things, though from an opposite and disapproved angle, since artifice is a sin for being useless and immoral, whereas the essence of realism is its morality."

Much can be said for this strategy. It bears resemblance to that of Hawthorne, who walked the narrow frontier between the real and fanciful in order to treat more profoundly the truths of the human heart. But the differences are significant. Donoso doesn't walk that frontier; he obliterates it and thumbs his nose or makes obscene gestures at those on the side of realism. Thus, what Hawthorne gained is lost to Donoso.

A primary weakness in the strategy is an over-reliance on the power of pure narrative. Donoso's narrator insists that there is nothing in his pages, as complicated as they might at times appear, "that can't be grasped as pure narrative." In fact, he suggests that "pure narrative is the true protagonist in a novel that sets out to grind up characters, time, space, psychology, and sociology in one great tide of language." His confidence in the forceful attraction of pure narrative is that of a true believer. No amount of artificiality or implausibility can negate that force. At the end of the book he makes a special point of saying that "in spite of having created my characters as a-psychological, unlifelike, artificial, I haven't managed to avoid becoming passionately involved with them and with their surrounding world." And he intimates his assumption that his readers have experienced the same passionate involvement.

I was not passionately involved. Instead, I felt impatient with Donoso's self-indulgent trifling with artifice as a means of making thinly disguised angry and hyperbolic commentary on his government and society. It seems a form of cheating to deny responsibility

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for representing reality or that reality can be represented at all, while leveling charges of the most grievous cruelty and barbarism. The lure of pure narrative lies behind this cheating. The contemporary writer, defensively recoiling from the oppression, exploitation, and violence in modern life, seeks to escape complicity by repudiating rationality and representation and perhaps even meaning itself. But men and women being what they are, "pure" narrative remains ultimately an illusion, and its pursuit serves only to widen the division between art and society and gives impetus to the spiral of artistic impotence and alienation.

Maybe the ineluctable and enduring appeal of narrative is a reasonable article of faith, but only if we understand that that appeal is conditioned and not absolute. Narrative's power over us diminishes with exaggerated implausibility. Artifice or fantasy played off against the real can delight and illuminate, but used programmatically to undermine confidence in the real may only confuse and unsettle. Vargas Llosa's novel demonstrates the power and charm of narrative, even pursued primarily as an end in itself, when it remains within mimetic bounds. Donoso's novel demonstrates the emptiness and confusion that result from an aggressive and politically centered anti-realism. cc

REVISIONS

The Professor at the End of the World

Neither communist authorities nor American intellectuals ever knew quite what to do with Pitirim Sorokin. Born in 1889 in a village in northern Russia, Sorokin had barely escaped execution in 1918 for his opposition to the Bolsheviks when he was immediately in trouble again for studying the effects of mass starvation in the Russian countryside in 1921 and for illegally publishing his doctoral dissertation, *System of Sociology*, the following year. Perhaps it was a rare fit of mercy that prompted Soviet leaders to expel Sorokin to the West. But it may have been more in the spirit of revenge that they inflicted upon Western academics the embarrassment of having to deal with a brilliant nonconformist.

During his career at the University of Minnesota and at Harvard, Sorokin won many defenders and admirers. But he also violated so many of the ideological shibboleths of 20th-century social science that many of his colleagues must have wondered if there wasn't some way to send this troublemaker back to the steppes. Sorokin's *magnum opus*, *Social and Cultural Dynamics: A Study of Change in Major Systems of Art, Truth, Ethics, Law, and Social Relationship*, first published in four volumes between 1937 and 1942, has just been reissued in its one-volume 1957 abridgment (Transaction; New Brunswick, NJ; $19.95), with an excellent new introduction by Michel P. Richard. To read the *Dynamics* again is to marvel at the prescience of Sorokin's insights and to understand only too well why Sorokin so often sharply disagreed with other prominent social scientists.

As a distinctively modern discipline, sociology has attracted many who wholly embrace the values of modernism and who regard the past as a lamentable legacy of prejudice, superstition, and horror, only now giving way before the advance of enlightened thinkers like themselves. Sorokin defiantly challenged this perspective. In his ambitious survey in *Dynamics* of the worlds of law, philosophy, literature, and social norms—from Thales and Praxiteles to Trotsky and Monet—Sorokin detected a "superrhythm" in human history, an "eternal return," with Ideational eras based upon faith in transcendent absolutes alternating with Sensate cultures emphasizing the empirical and this-worldly. He heaped ridicule upon the strictly linear view of history espoused by the "progress cult" of the "throng of intellectuals, humanitarians, pacifistic and progressive parlor socialists, liberal ministers, professors, politicians." Modern man's dream of utopia, Sorokin dismissed as a "fascinating soap bubble," the illusion of "a disintegrated mind, of demoralized man."

Such candor alienated more than a few academics. Sorokin also broke the rules for modern intellectuals by attacking the "externalism" of philosophies which locate the "roots of evil" in the "environment or factors external to the person . . . under consideration." Similarly, Sorokin's insistance that *real* knowledge comes through "mystic intuition" and "super-rational religions"—well, this was simply beyond the pale of polite discussion. And what forward-thinking social engineer, radiant with hope for the dawning era, would not be exasperated with Sorokin's black predictions for the future: "Rude force and cynical fraud will become the only arbiters of all values. . . . *Bellum omnium contra omnes*—man against man, class, nation, creed and race against man, class, nation, creed and race. . . . Suicide, mental disease, and crime will grow. Weariness will spread over larger and larger numbers of the population."

Sorokin's sole hope lay in the pattern of "*crisis-catharsis-charisma-resurrection*" he found in ancient history: "By tragedy, suffering, and crucifixion, [the modern world] will be purified and brought back to reason, and to eternal, lasting, universal, and absolute values. . . . [Western leaders] will increasingly become again new Saint Pauls, Saint Augustines, and great religious and ethical leaders." It may be a while before we see the new Saint Pauls and Saint Augustines that Sorokin anticipated. For now, perhaps the most we can hope for is the occasional Jeremiah among the social sciences. (BC) cc

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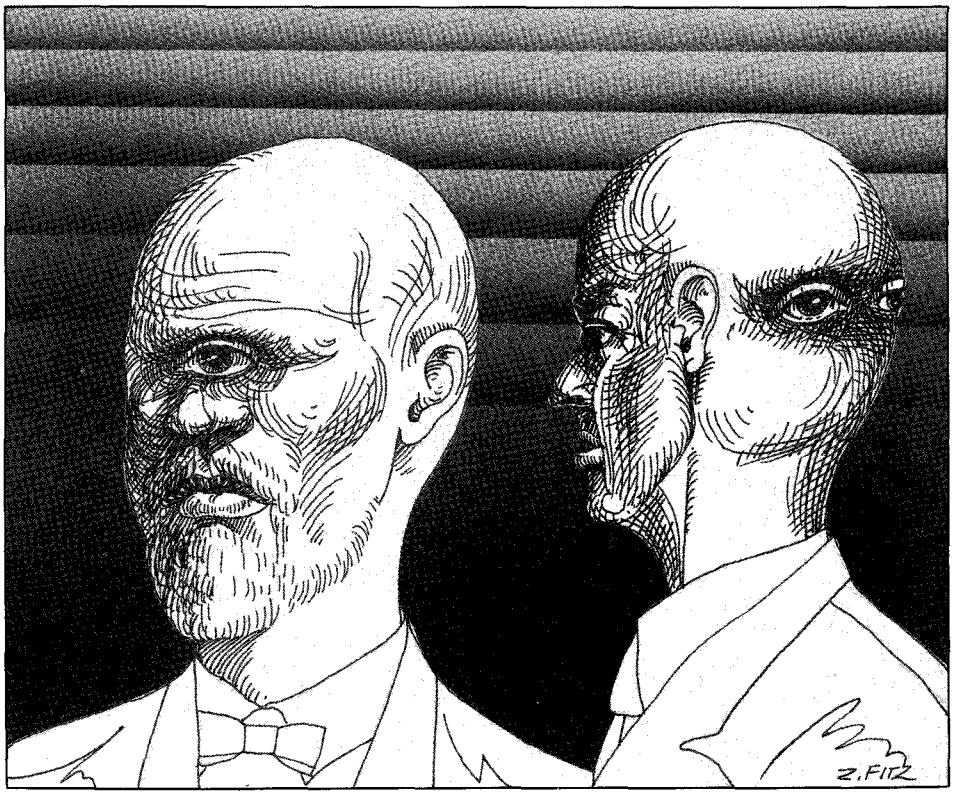
Tocqueville Redivivus *by Clyde Wilson*

"America does not repel the past or what it has produced."

—Walt Whitman

John Lukacs: *Outgrowing Democracy: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century*; Doubleday; Garden City, NY.

Were some power, either republican or princely, to entrust me with a classroom of promising youth who were to be educated to become the best possible historians of the future—well, I would find the works of John Lukacs indispensable. Why? Simply because I can discover in our time no better example of creative historical thinking and practice.



One of Lukacs' themes has been the defense, at the same time innovative and reactionary, of history as a form of knowledge—distinct from other forms of apprehending the world and uniquely characteristic of the West. He has also practiced what he has preached. Each of his books—*A New History of the Cold War*; *The Passing of the Modern Age*; *The Last European War: 1939-1941*; *1945: The Year Zero*; *Philadelphia: Patricians and Philistines*, and the latest—has provided a working example of how to apply historical thinking to the understanding of some part of the awesome and overwhelming experience of our century.

Many of our best historians, after their first few insights, have tended to repeat themselves. (This, perhaps, is more a criticism of national standards of discourse and the degradation of American publishing than it is of historians.) By contrast, Lukacs has in each book set himself a new challenge. Purposes and themes recur, of course, but each book has been an exhibit in creative historical practice, and *Outgrowing Democracy* is no exception.

Basic to Lukacs' performance was his realization, early on, that the canons of historiography created in the 19th century were not fully applicable to the historical reconstruction and understanding of the 20th. History, by these canons, was to be written from a thorough and thoroughly detached examination of the documentary record. This was and is an eminently sound doctrine, but the secret of all good rules is in knowing when to apply them. (For instance, computers are marvelous aids for accounting and for analysis of empirical data, but to apply them more than incidentally to matters such as education or warfare merely reveals that the researcher does not know what he is doing. This, Lukacs would say, is a characteristically American error.)

The canons of historical research simply do not fit our century. Our century is the century of inflation (another of Lukacs' themes), including inflation of the documentary record. Like dollar bills, there are more and more documents worth less and less (not to mention the shift of large segments of communication and consciousness away from the written word to electronic and pictorial media). To write the history of the 20th century from documents alone is both impossible and irrelevant. Historical understanding must, rather, be an imaginative act—faithful to the factual record but embodying a process closer to that of creative literature than scientific investigation. Lukacs has dramatically demonstrated the utility of this approach successfully once more in *Outgrowing Democracy*, though the book has received less favorable attention than some of his other works.

The challenge that Lukacs has set himself in *Outgrowing Democracy* is Tocquevillian—the interpretation of the nature and status of American democracy as it has evolved through our century. For his purpose, the title is perhaps unfortunate, for it gives an unjustified authoritarian connotation to his analysis. What Lukacs' analysis seeks is not the abandonment but the maturing of American democracy. It is just such a work as Tocqueville himself would have written—could he have added to his knowledge of the Jacobin revolution a sad wisdom acquired by

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observing the Bolshevik, National Socialist, and sexual revolutions. *Outgrowing Democracy* is the work of a European, friendly to the aspirations of the American people, but distant enough and culturally conservative enough to observe the blemishes as well as the accomplishments of America. That is, the work examines us sympathetically, but with historical perspective and from outside rather than inside the accepted conventions of American thought.

It is just such an approach that finds Americans, and probably any people, most resistant. Large numbers of Americans will accept any totalist rejection of their society that can be invented, because that is compatible with their categories of thought. To be required to examine and expose the flaws in these categories of thought themselves is an uncomfortable and unwanted experience. But this kind of examination and exposure is just what historians should supply. We may argue forever about the merits of internationalist or anticommunist policies. That is for politicians and journalists. What the historian can and should give is the underlying pattern. For instance, Lukacs points out tellingly that in 1942 the Luce publications declared Lenin to be perhaps the greatest man of the century, but in 1953 they theologized that Communism *per se* was mortal sin. Lukacs' point is that both positions fell short of an intelligent assessment of reality and of a prudentially responsible patriotism, and that the flipflop is characteristic of the American way of going about things.

To tell Americans that their sentimental celebration of the family has been demonstrably accompanied by a massive breakdown of sound domestic relations; that their vast expenditures and pretensions in education and culture have been largely counterproductive; that their national feeling has often served ideology rather than patriotism, and that their generous internationalism has been merely a naive nationalism; that their prosperity has often been synonymous with rootlessness and declining standards and their equality with conformity; and that their religion has been more sociology than faith; or to point out the obvious truth that the American national character has been at least twice destabilized by massive immigration, and that each ethnic group has brought negative as well as positive additions to the melting pot—none of this is what we want to hear, whether we are radicals dedicated to a vision of endless tampering with the social fabric or "conservatives" who think the sufficient ends of life have been found in the marketplace and anticommunism, perhaps held together by a synthetic "civic religion."

Many of Lukacs' familiar historical themes have been worked into *Outgrowing Democracy*: the immateriality of materialism and especially of economics, the destructive Wilsonian straitjacket of American thinking about the outside world, the passing of the bourgeois age, the falsity of "public opinion." There are many new (at least to me) themes as well. These, I suspect, are intended to offer historical perspective on the emergent establishment of "conservatives" and "neoconservatives" and are not apt to please its leaders. For instance: the Eisenhower era was not the halcyon time of American goodness, but a tragedy of missed opportunities and the seedbed of later disasters and degradations; bureaucratization of mind is as endemic in and characteristic of the American private sector as the public; our anticommunism has sometimes been as shortsighted as our international do-goodism—that is, that Americans have often exhibited nationalism rather than that older and better sentiment, patriotism.

My recapitulation badly slights the subtleties of Lukacs' account of American history in the 20th century, for nearly every page is freighted with subsidiary insights. Now and then, naturally, the American who is largely persuaded will yet be provoked to an objection. In picturing, correctly, the pernicious effects of the devolution of American Puritanism and the dilution of American Catholicism, for instance, Lukacs has left out of the picture the continuing widespread vitality (obvious in the South) of a healthy, non-Puritan Protestantism. And American literature, one can argue, despite the decline perceptively identified by Lukacs, has in some ways reflected the Western tradition better than has that of jaded Europe. True, there is not much doubt about the American obsession with physical comfort—but I have never heard of a single other nation that has not shown the same tendency when it could be afforded. There might even be something to be said for American naiveté and "exceptionalism" (as long as it is not messianic), when one considers how regularly the wisdom and maturity of Europe has stumbled over the brink of disaster.

I happen to think Lukacs is correct on nearly every point. But even if he is not, he has fulfilled the historian's duty in the highest manner by expanding our ability to understand ourselves and our situation. He is the friend who loves us enough to be objective when we need objectivity. I began by indulging in the fantasy that I was charged with the education of the best of future historians. Allow me the teacher's ultimate fantasy: that I am charged with the education of future statesmen. The first thing would be to make sure that the promising youth learned to ride hard, shoot straight, and tell the truth. Then, I would set them to master the ancient and English classics (including the Bible) and the Founding Fathers. When that had been accomplished, it would be time for them to begin to understand their century, their nation, and the task demanded by their future—which Lukacs correctly formulates as the development of a mature American conservatism, aimed at the intelligent adaptation and preservation of the substance of the West. For this stage of the education of future statesmen, I can think of no better place to start than *Outgrowing Democracy*. cc

REINVENTING THE WHEEL

a tribute to public education

". . . Robert Hayden—who once said that 'nothing human is foreign to me . . .'"

Edward Hirsch in
The Nation,
December 21, 1985

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King, Queen, Knave—Mind, Brain, and Body

by Thomas Fleming

"Where so'er I turn my view
All is strange, yet nothing new;
Endless labour all along,
Endless labour to be wrong."

—Samuel Johnson

Stephen R. L. Clark: *From Athens to Jerusalem: The Love of Wisdom and the Love of God*; Clarendon Press (OUP); Oxford.

Owen J. Flanagan Jr.: *The Science of the Mind*; Bradford Books/MIT Press; Cambridge, MA; $12.50.

Ruth Garrett Millikan: *Language, Thought, and Other Biological Categories: New Foundations for Realism*; Bradford Books/MIT Press; Cambridge, MA.

Robert Ornstein and Richard F. Thompson: *The Amazing Brain*; Houghton Mifflin; Boston; $16.95.

John Searle: *Minds, Brains, and Science: The 1984 Reith Lectures*; BBC; London, England.

Epicurus had an answer for everything. The universe consisted of nothing except atoms and void; the qualities of matter and of our sensory experience—hardness, color, heaviness, etc.—were determined completely by the size, shape, and motion of the atoms. The qualities of human life were largely a question of pleasure and pain. Right living consisted in maximizing the one and minimizing the other. The best way to do this, he thought, was to withdraw from the active life and to contemplate life's mysteries, as Epicurus did in his garden. A materialist philosophy was necessary for peace of mind, because it eliminated all the supernatural terrors of Hell. What common people called soul or mind, since it consisted of atoms, could not survive the dissolution of the body. After death, there was nothing, therefore nothing to be afraid of. The philosophic man could face the universe with equanimity if he kept in mind the central doctrine of materialism: that every phenomenon had an explanation, a materialist explanation. Any given account might not be the right one, *but*, he insisted, there was a right one waiting to be discovered.

The fly in the Epicurean ointment was the problem of the will. How could a person *choose* to live rightly, to join the Master in the Garden, if his mental life were determined by the iron laws of physics? Epicurus' answer (which satisfied none but the Epicureans) would have gratified the heart of many a modern physicist: while the motion of atoms was generally "downward" (as Democritus had said), there was an unpredictable swerve in their descent. If the atoms of the mind are unpredictable, this must mean that they are free. Many moderns, especially Christians, have derived a similar comfort from Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in quantum mechanics. While C.S. Lewis warned against pinning our hopes on the ultimate irrationality of the universe, most of us have not been so cautious. But how we get from the subatomic level to the level of ordinary existence is a problem that has seemed to bother few people.

It bothers the philosopher John Searle. Near the end of his 1984 Reith Lectures given originally on the BBC—a book that cannot be praised too highly for its lucidity and readability—Searle points out what should have been obvious all along:

> Indeterminism at the level of particles in physics is really no support at all to any doctrine of the freedom of the will; because first, the statistical indeterminacy at the level of particles does not show any indeterminacy at the level of objects that matter to us—human bodies, for example. And secondly, even if there is an element of indeterminacy in the behavior of physical particles—even if they are only statistically predictable—still, that by itself gives no scope for human freedom of the will; because it doesn't follow from the fact that particles are only statistically determined that the human mind can force the statistically determined particles to swerve from their paths.

What we know of physics, Searle argues, indicates the impossibility of free will; however, it is not physics but biology that inspires Searle's philosophy of brain/mind.

Such a philosophy has been a long time in coming. In *The Science of the Mind*, Owen J. Flanagan Jr. does a creditable job of tracing the rise of scientific psychology. His introductory chapter on Descartes raises (as Descartes did himself) most of the fundamental questions. Descartes' basic answer—that there is a split between mind and body—unfortunately poses the serious problem of how an immaterial mind can influence the physical body. Perhaps the worst effect of a radical mind/body dualism was that it freed whole centuries of philosophers from the need to consider the brain. Without too much exaggeration it can be said that the whole history of psychological speculation—from Locke, Hume, and Kant, all the way down to Freudians, Behaviorists, and cognitive psychologists—has been a flight from reality: the reality of the central nervous system.

One of the oddest features in this history has been the paradox of philosophers prating about nature without taking the trouble to examine it. While Flanagan accurately represents William James as the modern Socrates who took psychology down from the

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Thomas Fleming is editor of Chronicles.

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clouds and naturalized it, it is also true that James preferred to write about "conscious mental life," which he regarded not as the brain itself but as the product of interaction between the brain and the world. Freud also began, promisingly enough, as a student of neurology, but soon took flight into higher realms of mythology—imagine trying to falsify the superego.

The most amusing case is the irrepressible B.F. Skinner, who took up and refined John B. Watson's crude theory of stimulus/response behaviorism and turned it into a universalist philosophy. In the name of hardheaded materialism, Skinner studiously avoided discussing not only the facts of conscious mental life (a large part of being a behaviorist is learning to describe behavior without referring to mental states) but worse, he avoided even the brain, partly—it would seem—for political reasons. Skinner does not like the idea that the human potential might not be quite infinite, that it might be limited by the particular and inherited qualities of the jumble of neurons (about the size and shape of two fists put together) within our skull.

Skinner is not alone in having a problem with the brain. Philosophers are generally fond of grand theories that transcend what we actually know about human life. The exceptions—Aristotle and perhaps Hume—are all too rare. At this point, we know too little about the brain (and the brain is itself perhaps too complex) to construct a grand and unified psychological theory of the mind. For this reason, philosophers either want to bypass the brain—like Freud and Skinner—or like the various schools of cognitive psychology insist that mental life and brain events are not the same thing. Noam Chomsky's search for a universal grammar has been paralleled by the efforts of Daniel Dennett, Jerry Fodor, John Anderson, and others to discover the rules governing our mental life. The entire project is, in essence, an attempt to elaborate on Kant's description of the mind as determined by innate categories. All this would be laudable if they did not persist in treating the mind as if it were a machine that processed information in some way that is distinct from the organic functions of the central nervous system.

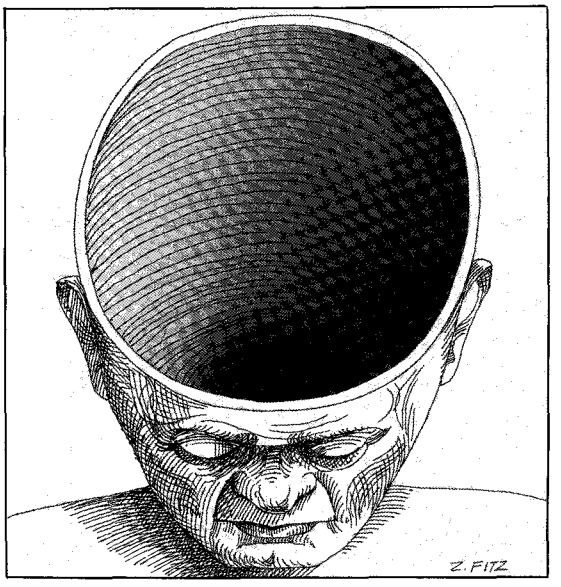
It is not that they are spiritualists or Platonists or—God forbid—theists. They are nothing of the kind. They are, every last one of them, thoroughgoing materialists. They just happen to prefer concentrating on what cannot be studied directly ("mental life") rather than on what can (the brain). Ruth Garrett Millikan has attempted to offer a sort of Aristotelian corrective by providing an account of mind that begins with the idea of "organic functions." While Millikan aims at a fuller naturalization of epistemology, it is curious that there is little or no sign of any interest in the brain *per se*. She may be on to something, but it is hard to tell: the book is virtually unreadable. If we had world enough and time, such writing, lady, were no crime. . . .

For many cognitive philosophers, the favorite model for the way the mind/brain works is the computer. Of the many objections to this equation—and to the claim that computers think—the most devastating has been provided by Searle in the famous "Chinese-speaking room" argument he has made several times and repeats in *Minds, Brains, and Science*. Imagine a computer programmed to answer questions in Chinese with a degree of fluency equal to that of a native speaker. Does the computer "know" Chinese? To answer the question he asks us to imagine ourselves in a room full of Chinese symbols. We know nothing of the language but are provided with a book instructing us on how to manipulate the symbols:

> Now suppose that some other Chinese symbols are passed into the room, and that you are given further rules for passing back Chinese symbols out of the room. Suppose that unknown to you the symbols passed into the room are called "questions" by the people outside the room, and the symbols you pass back out of the room are called "answers to the questions."

What if you are so well instructed and manipulated that your "answers" are every bit as good as the answers given by a native speaker? The fact remains that you still don't know a word of Chinese. Artificial Intelligence, Searle argues, possesses only syntax. To think, there must also be semantics, i.e., meaning or content. Not only does no existing digital computer have the ability to think, no conceivable computer will ever think. Thinking is an organic function of the brain. When the day comes that we can make an organic replica of the brain, then and only then will we have designed a computer that thinks.

If the mind/brain does not work like a computer, the 10 billion individual



neurons are all "like a computer that is both digital and analog." At least, that is the suggestion made by the authors of *The Amazing Brain*. Unlike other books that have pretended to explain the functions of the brain for the average reader, *The Amazing Brain* is detailed and informative. If (like me) you have never had a course in biology or philosophy but want to get a sense of how the brain works—or at least that bit of it we understand—then this is the book for you. It is with considerable relief to turn from the speculations and inconclusive experiments of psychologists and philosophers to the quite literally "amazing" discoveries of neuroanatomists and neurophysiologists.

What science can do (and it is a blessing as well as a curse) is to pose questions about material causes. The trouble comes when scientific methods are indiscriminately applied to the phenomena of human consciousness—in what is called the social sciences. Searle neatly explodes the pretensions

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of the social scientists who make up "laws" about law or marriage or even money. Since our mental states (by definition unknowable) remain "crucial to social phenomena," social laws are impossible: In order to get married or buy property, you and other people have to think that is what you are doing. Enormous advances have been made in the study of the brain during a period in which psychology has become a battlefield of dozens of warring sects. Even so, sensible people have generally assumed that our mental life was involved in organic functions. Even if we had a more complete understanding of how the brain functions, would we really be any further along than Epicurus in solving the problem of free will and morality?

Epicurus, remember, formulated the fundamental principle of all materialist philosophies: that every event has a material cause and, therefore, a materialist explanation, whether or not a given explanation is correct. Setting aside the "swerve" and the uncertainty principle, can the will be free in a determined universe that includes our mind (=brain)? William James was troubled by the problem. With Samuel Johnson, he realized that all our reason is against, all our experience is for it. Flanagan thinks that James had the wherewithal to solve the problem, if only he had adopted a "soft determinism." While it is true that people cannot be held accountable for past actions—they could not have acted otherwise—they can in the present choose to begin modifying their behavior in accordance with a certain ethical view of life. Even if this began to solve the technical problem of free will, it would not get at the deeper problem of our moral sense. Most of us behave as if some acts were right and others wrong. Even soft determinism makes our consciences inane.

It is hard to believe Flanagan expects us to take him seriously. His "solution" to the problem of free will is the Marxist formula (freedom is the recognition of necessity) or the reductio ad absurdum offered by the sociobiologist David Barash that "free will may actually be greatest when everyone is able to behave in accordance with his or her inclinations." Flanagan and Barash both adopt a form of "compatibilism," which—as Searle observes—"denies the substance of free will while maintaining its verbal shell." Searle has the great merit of confessing his inability to reconcile free will and determinism. With some reluctance, he opts for complete determinism, even though "evolution has given us a form of experience of voluntary action where the experience of freedom, that is to say, the experience of the sense of alternative possibilities, is built into the very structure of conscious, voluntary, intentional human behavior." Searle falls back on determinism because he thinks it makes science possible. If the will were free, it would mean that there was a self capable of interfering with the courses of physical laws.

But it is not obvious that science is possible in a determinist universe, where, as Mary Worthy Montagu expressed it, "We are no more free agents than the Queen of Clubs when she takes the Knave of Hearts." It is an old problem, as old as Plato and Augustine, but it is worth stating again (as C.S. Lewis did in *Miracles*). If all our thoughts—including the thoughts of scientists—are determined by the unreasoning forces and particles of nature, then how can notions like "truth" or "falsity" have any substance or relevance? If John Searle's decision to become a determinist has been determined, then what possible difference can it make? Some scientists take refuge in the notion that our brains have evolved to have a certain "fit" with the material world.

In *From Athens to Jerusalem* (an expanded version of his 1982 Gifford Lectures) Stephen Clark makes what should be the obvious point that "the neo-Darwinian account of our history is not one that we can coherently believe," because it is self-refuting:

> If we attempt to follow through its implications we find that it gives us no right to believe in the theories we form about the world, including the neo-Darwinian story itself. It must also lead to doubts about the consciousness of our fellow creatures, and even (absurdly) our own.

In Clark's view we must begin with what is given to us, our consciousness. For logic and observation to work (as in science), we must take it on faith that "the universe is not one to which

BOOKS IN BRIEF—ANTHROPOLOGY

Directions in Cognitive Anthropology; edited by Janet W.D. Dougherty; University of Illinois Press; Urbana. In the past 30 years, culture has been redefined by many anthropologists as "whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to . . . a society's members." The emphasis on knowledge has led to the creation of cognitive anthropology, a comparatively new discipline whose range is well illustrated in this significant volume. Like much anthropological theory, CA is rooted in linguistics. Much of the work concerns folk classifications of plants or personality. More metaphysical questions are investigated with a good deal less success. Even great linguists like Chomsky obscure their points with jargon and pseudoscientific equations, and their disciples are even worse. Anthropology, which can be the most humane of the social sciences, now runs the risk of becoming marginalized—like phrenology or psychoanalysis. This volume contains a useful article by Roy D'Andrade on character terms and an important piece by Burgess, Kempton, and MacLaury on color terms, refines and extends the work of Brent Berlin, Paul Kay, and Chad McDaniel, and gives hints that color terms evolve historically within a language in accordance with the human visual system.

Law and Order in the New Guinea Highlands: Encounters With Enga by Robert J. Gordon and Mervyn J. Meggitt; University Press of Vermont/University Press of New England; Hanover and London. The breakdown in law and order is an urgent national problem in New Guinea. Approaches to the problem usually focus on official agencies and are flawed by romanticization of the past. Gordon and Meggitt offer exemplary fieldwork, a serious criticism of Marxist-dominated theory, and a hardheaded grasp of the practical problems facing an emerging nation. In sum, an excellent piece of "applied anthropology."

Testament to the Bushman by Laurens van der Post and Jane Taylor; Viking Penguin; New York. A touching tribute in words and photographs to the most-scrutinized primitives in the world. The peculiar success of the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* creates a natural market for this readable exercise in amateur ethnography—a spin-off of a TV series.

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consciousness is alien, but one founded on the very patterns to be found also in our intellect." If we are able to understand the world, it is only because our minds "mirror or share in the pattern and life which is the foundation of the world."

In the course of these essays, Clark confronts most of the popular accounts of conscious life, all of which falter on the rock of our intuition: as conscious beings we are aware of ourselves and of other creatures in a way that it is hard to imagine could depend on electrochemical processes. In the end, Clark settles for something like Berkeley's position, that our consciousness is a reflection of the divine mind that is responsible for the universe. Clark takes our obsession with extraterrestrial intelligence as a speculative confirmation of Berkeley: if there are alien creatures of intelligence, we will only be able to communicate with them, to share consciousness, on the assumption that both of us are theomorphic. Einstein observed that the one incomprehensible feature of the universe was its comprehensibility. Clark insists that this explicability "is explicable, and expectable, on the theistic hypothesis alone."

If only a belief in God makes science possible, what are we to say to scientists who claim that their research leads inevitably to atheist materialism? As Clark suggests, we must—on their account of the matter—regard their intellectual life as an exotic neurological phenomenon. Why, after all, don't most people choose to do science? They cannot make the claim that science does anyone any good, because goodness goes out with the same bathwater as truth.

Scientists say they enjoy what they do, and I for one am not about to deny them that pleasure. On the other hand, I am not so sure I want them to have fun on money supplied by taxpayers. If people want to pay them for what they do, as we pay to see a Cubs game (an equally pointless and futile exercise, it sometimes seems), that is all well and good, but there is no adequate reason to support scientists or even give them degrees. If it is true that science makes us determinists and determinism eliminates any point to "the life of the mind," then they might fairly be regarded as the enemies of the university.

But just as we are about to expel the scientists—as Plato kicked the poets out of his Republic—it is good to remember that some of the men who have contributed the most to our understanding of the brain—Wilder Penfield and Sir John Eccles—were firm in their conviction that the mind exists apart from the brain. If Searle and other mere philosophers are sure of things that Penfield and Eccles are not, it cannot be on the basis of superior knowledge. It can only be that they have accepted a view of the world as old as Epicurus, that they are content with any explanation so long as it eliminates the supernatural. To hold on to such a conviction against the evidence of consciousness itself—to say nothing of what it does to their desire to make sense of the world—requires more faith than most ordinary men possess. For that alone, they should have their reward. cc

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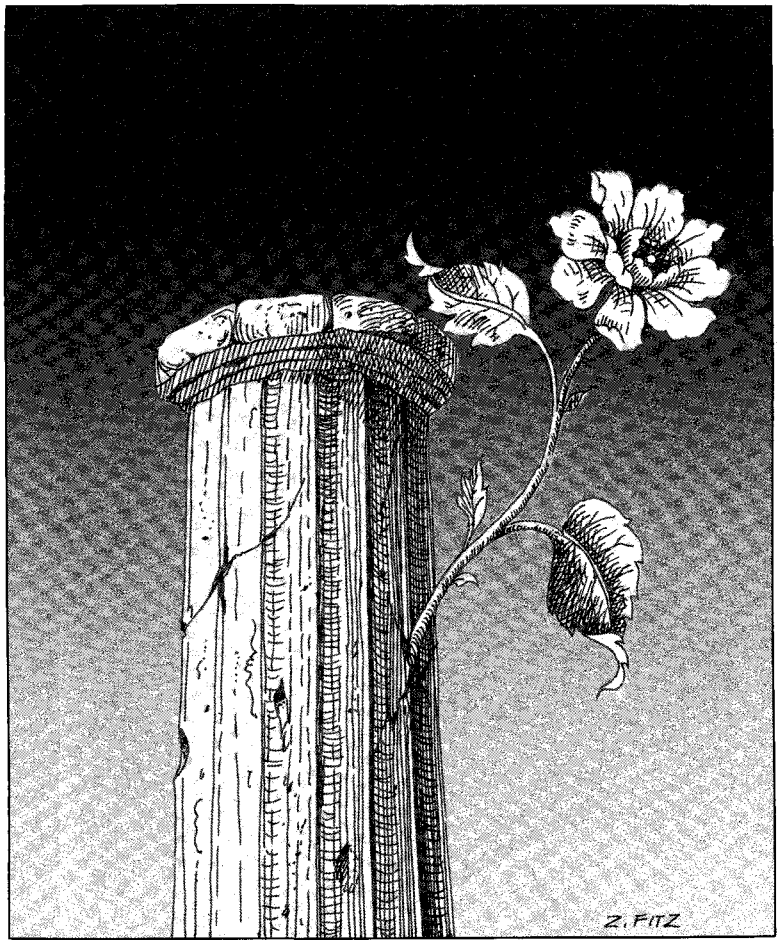
THE MOST UNBELIEVABLE THING

by Robert Nisbet

The following is the text of Professor Nisbet's speech at the 1985 Ingersoll Prizes Awards Banquet:

One of Hans Christian Andersen's lesser-known stories bears the title "The Most Unbelievable Thing." A king offered a fortune to the subject who created the most unbelievable thing in the arts. Competition was intense and prolonged. When at last the day of judgment came, the jury, after inspecting all the entries, settled on a marvelous fusion of a clock and calendar, one with hundreds of moving parts, set in rare metals and crowned by precious stones. This, said the jury, is surely the most unbelievable thing. But as the king was about to ratify judgment and make the award, a competitor, insane with jealousy, came up with sledge hammer in hand and smashed the beautiful creation into a thousand pieces. The crowd was horrified. But the jury said: "Why, surely, *this* is the most unbelievable thing, to smash so perfect a work of art."



Western culture may be neither unbelievable nor perfect as a work of history. But for 2,500 years it has commanded the admiration and awe, and not seldom the covetousness, of countless peoples. Set as it is upon a small promontory of the vast Eurasian continent, Western civilization has been, from at least the fifth century B.C., the unique object of wonder for peoples from almost all parts of the world. We take nothing away from the civilizations of ancient Egypt, Persia, and China when we declare the West without serious rival as the collective culture hero in world history. For this the West has, however, paid a price: the price that is always exacted of the great and noble by the envious and covetous. From the Persians turned back at Thermopylae and then the Germanic-barbarian invaders of Rome, down to their successors, the Mongols, Muslims, and Slavs, the West has been a uniquely desirable civilization in the world: the barbarians have sought to invade it from the outside, as they still do in our day. Worse, Western civilization has had, especially in modern times, those from within whose impact upon their own civilization is hardly less than that of the barbarians beyond the walls.

There are various reasons for the West's remarkable fertility of culture, and there is no time for exploring any of them in proper measure. There is one reason, though, that I want to stress here: the West's unequaled profusion of inventions during its two and a half millennia of existence. I am referring to more than the mechanical inventions which immediately come to mind, though I do not deprecate these. Almost all cultural change has in it invention of one kind or other. This is as true of systems of morality, musical composition, statecraft, literature and its forms, and painting and sculpture as it is of technology and science. So much that we lazily ascribe to "growth" and "development" is in fact the child of Western man's inventive genius.

There is no other civilization known that can match the prodigality of inventions in the West. The reasons are several and begin with the generally freer air that has existed from the beginning. But there is one that I want particularly to note here: the conception of time in Western thought. Man is a time-binding creature, a faculty that along with language gives him uniqueness among the species. Tomor-

Robert Nisbet received the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters on November 22, 1985.

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row and tomorrow may creep into the present, but so do all our yesterdays. Nothing is more important to the creative process than the conception of the past. Cultures have become ossified from too strict a veneration for the past; but they have been turned to cultural froth by ignorance or neglect of the past. If a culture is absolutely obliged to choose, it is better to mummify the past than to be in ignorance of it. But far better, as the West's course illustrates, is the steering carefully between the Scylla of rapt immobility and the Charybdis of idle neglect. What is important is use of the past to serve the present.

The great ages of Western history, beginning with Pericles' Athens and including the High Middle Ages, and not forgetting America's 18th century, have been built around a singularly delicate but potent balancing of past and present, a balancing in which the imperatives of the present make all the brighter the rich and diverse resources of the past. There is a telescoping of the generations in such ages. St. Augustine likened the development of humanity to the education of a single individual through all time. In the 13th century an allegorical figure became common in writing: that of a dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant. The dwarf represented the present, the giant the past. Only by availing himself of the giant could the dwarf see farther into the future than could the giant.

My own sense of individual biography suggests that the past has similar importance in the works of highly creative individuals. There is an acute feeling for what Eliot called the "usable past." Eliot's reverence for the past is best shown by his mining of it for often radical poetic purposes. From Plato to Einstein there is a continuing respect for the past, a respect that is based upon the sense of the past's richness as a mine of resources in all areas of the human mind. Max Planck, whose quantum theory is often held to be the single most revolutionary idea in 20th-century physical science, was notorious for his traditionalism; he himself said that he found the theory in materials available to everyone; and he said also that he had not turned to this new theory until every possible explanation from the past had been examined first. Churchill said that he loved the past, distrusted the present, and feared the future. A friend likened his mind to a layer-cake, each layer an epoch of the past. For all that, Churchill's grasp of the present was, as we know gratefully, superior. The greater of the Impressionists knew and respected the past; they sought only to build on it by use of inventions in color. Had it not been for a blockheaded establishment in Paris, fearful of all innovation in art, the Impressionists would have shown their canvases in conventional galleries; and their true relation to the past would have been instantly evident.

The most unbelievable thing about the 20th century is the near-loss of the past: loss through crippling and distortion, often through its murder. Quite rightly does the historian J.H. Plumb refer to "the death of the past." Eliot speaks of "disowning the past." Our conception of present and past is no longer the dwarf standing on a giant's shoulders. In our art and literature and philosophy, the dwarf has gotten down from the giant, to stand on the ground and kick the giant's ankles. Our flouting of the past is exactly commensurate with our narcissism of the present and our worship of the future. The greatest crime the intellectual can be thought guilty of is that of treating the past with respect, of "romanticizing the past" as convention and cant usually have it. Nostalgia, which is the rust of memory, is permitted because it sells well; but not history. Hence, as everyone knows, the scuttling of curriculum in the schools by undermining the study of history. Never would the NEA "turn the clock back," as they love to say.

Such undermining is far from being merely a conceit of schools of education. It stems from our transformed popular regard for the past. For at least three centuries in the West there has been a relentless growth of systems of thought based upon a proposed extermination of the past from human thought. Descartes' rationalism, which has been well called "intellectual terrorism," urged the burning of all libraries and museums; Rousseau drew from this Cartesian philosophical nihilism a program of all-out political nihilism; Marx, child of both Descartes and Rousseau, saw all history as the necessary destruction of the past, in the interest of an ever-evolving present. And Freud populated the racial past with mythologically derived demons which relegate memory and tradition to the bins of the unconscious.

The most unbelievable thing about the 20th century is the near loss of the past. . . . Our conception of present and past is no longer than the dwarf standing on a giant's shoulders. In our art and literature and philosophy, the dwarf has gotten down from the giant, to stand on the ground and kick the giant's ankles.

But for all the assaults of modern Western history, the past is fundamentally indestructible. As I said, man is a time-binding creature; he can no more live without the past in his contemplation of the present than he can live without oxygen. The past is inseparable from the creative process and also from simple adaptation to crisis. The single greatest message of Orwell's *1984* is the tribute paid to the past by its incessant distortion by the totalitarian masters. The Bolsheviks, determined at first to create the new Soviet man overnight and to wipe out the Russian past, were not long in discovering the value of linking the Communist present to the pasts of Novgorod, Kiev, and the courts of Ivan and Peter. Over and over the lesson is the same: cast the past out the front door, as did Descartes, Rousseau, and Marx, and it will enter the side door. Inasmuch as the future is absolutely dark to our eyes and is the abode of charlatans, we have only the past to go to when we seek relief from the frustrations of the present. Not to the past of nostalgics, romantics, and antiquarians, but the past that is a vast theater in time with innumerable human dramas from which to draw inspiration and even role-models.

Someone, I think it was Camus, conceived the parable of the bee. It is in man's power, the parable says, to destroy the bee with a single clench of his hand. But the bee's sting has kept it alive as a species for 50 million years. It is the sting of the neglected past that will surely force us to restore it to the high place our forefathers gave it. And this will not be long in coming, I firmly believe. cc

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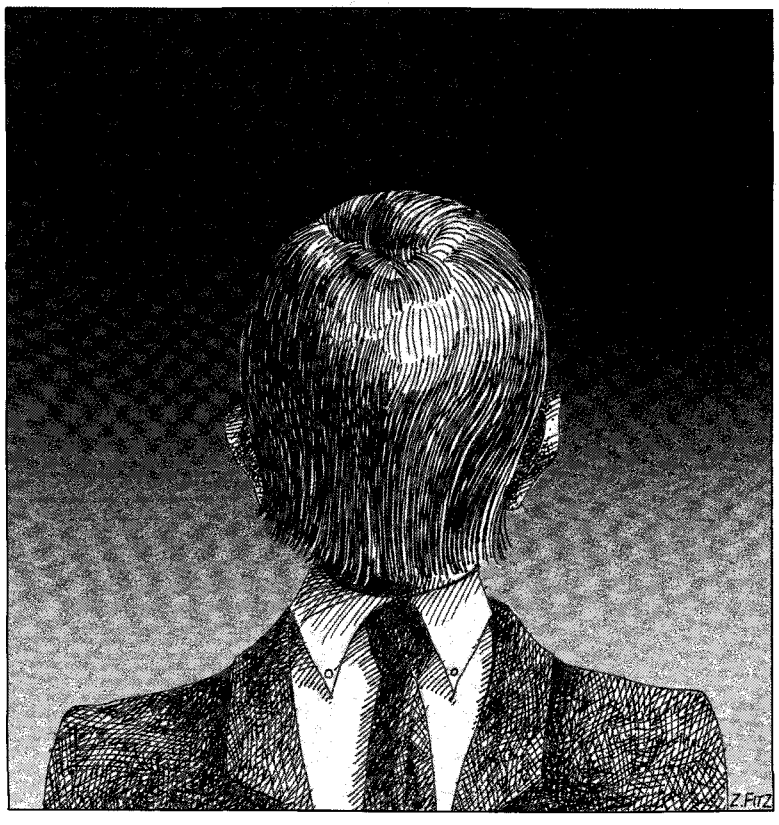
LET ME COUNT THE WAYS: WHAT TO MAKE OF SURVEY RESEARCH *by John Shelton Reed*

"Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be: why then should we desire to be deceived?"

—Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons*

No doubt many of us could think of an answer or two to His Grace's rhetorical question, but the case for social science—any science, for that matter—rests on what it can contribute to understanding things and actions and their consequences. For the last 40 years, an increasingly common method of research in the social sciences has been survey research. Demonstrably, it generates a great many "facts." Is there any good reason to ignore them?

"Don't confuse me with the facts" is an understandable and thoroughly human response. Often we just know what we know: if facts support us—well, of course they do; if they don't, we don't want to hear about it. Perhaps we can argue that we hold our beliefs in disregard of the available evidence because there are other sorts of truth, higher ones, beyond the merely empirical. (John Crowe Ransom's unorthodox defense of fundamentalism comes to mind.) But in the real world, so-called, where social and political controversy takes place, many will find that argument unconvincing.



There's no reason for conservatives to be fainthearted about the kinds of facts that survey research generates these days. Particularly as it is used in public-opinion polling, it is telling us some heartening things, things that you'd never learn from the op-ed pages. Without survey research, would we ever have known that young voters liked Ronald Reagan better than old ones, or learned that Reagan's support has been increasing among Black voters? Whether it is the Gallup Poll that repeatedly demonstrates that Episcopalians want their old prayer book back, or the recent surveys that show the common sense of common Black folk on the subject of racial quotas, survey research again and again reveals the gulf between ordinary citizens and the professionals who pretend to speak for them. If nothing else, these results make clear exactly who is guilty of "elitism," and they have made some very deserving people squirm.

Facts very much like these persuaded a good many of the most intelligent and honest liberals to abandon liberalism: we know them now, of course, as neoconservatives, whose complaint about liberalism is not that it's wrong, but that it doesn't work. Things and actions have consequences, all right, and often not the ones we had in mind. Survey research is one of the routine social-science methods for finding out just what's going on. Not incidentally, one of the best and most effective neoconservative publications is the American Enterprise Institute's *Public Opinion* magazine, largely a compendium of survey results. (The facts never entirely speak for themselves, but *Public Opinion* is a fine ventriloquist.)

Some of us who were in places like Columbia University in the 60's loved survey research precisely because it could be used to introduce a much-needed note of realism to the interminable political discussions of those days. It is no accident that the student radicals in the social sciences detested empirical social research in general and survey research in particular. It constantly told them things they didn't want to hear.

But conservative humanists, like radical social scientists, have also often been suspicious of the frankly empirical varieties of social science that, like survey research, do not at all resemble social philosophy. There are good reasons for this suspicion, even aside from the temperamental aversion to mathematics and statistics common in the softer of C.P. Snow's "two cultures." There is indeed something presumptuous, and perhaps even corrosive, about weighing and counting and averaging happiness and loyalties, affections and prejudices. Once upon a time, each survey respondent wound up, quite literally, as a punch card, subject to counting and sorting, if not to folding, spindling, and mutilating. (Now technology has replaced the cards with magnetic "images" on a tape or disk—not much better, aesthetically.) It is right that somebody view with

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distrust the process of reducing individual men and women to equally weighted "cases," forcing considered opinions and the variety of human characteristics into Procrustean "response categories."

Whatever the objectors might think, though, these are not objections to survey research *in principle*. Without exception, in my experience, they can be translated into technical terms, and they turn out to be valid criticisms only of *bad* survey research, thoughtless and incompetent work. Every teacher who has ever given and graded an examination has done something similar to survey research. Measuring attitudes is not a great deal more difficult than measuring knowledge, and does no more violence to what is being measured. Measuring behavior or demographic characteristics is usually easier.

This is not to say that measurement in survey research (or in the classroom) is always well done—only that it can be. There are legitimate objections to much of what passes for survey research. (But some of the most common complaints are not among them: for instance, "How can they talk about all Americans when they only interviewed 1,600?" Believe me, they can.) There are many fields where the gap between professional and amateur work is enormous, but probably few others where the difference is harder for consumers to detect. And any well-trained, unscrupulous survey jockey can fudge his research to produce—well, not *any* result, but close enough. The kind of work that gives survey research a bad name is usually conducted either by incompetents or by parties with an interest in, say, a *large* percentage rather than an accurate one. The very active committee on professional standards of the American Association for Public Opinion Research tries hard to cope with this sort of thing, with only limited success.

Just as it is foolish to believe survey research uncritically, however, it is a mistake to dismiss it out of hand. Reputable, established survey organizations, academic or commercial, can usually be assumed to be technically competent, and smart enough not to load their results. After all, their continued success depends on their usually being pretty close to right, and sometimes (as in election polls and sales projections) a criterion will come along sooner or later to show whether they are.

Like classroom teachers giving exams—maybe more so—professional survey researchers are not flying blind. They have an armory of field-tested techniques, backed up by an ever-growing body of research *on* research. If they are well-trained, they also have an acute understanding of the limitations of their techniques, and the conscientious ones try to make sure that others understand those limitations, too. (Obviously, I'm not talking about the occasional broadcasts by National Public Radio of the meditations of Lou Harris on his latest poll.)

In the interests of greater survey literacy, here is a mini-lesson on the subject.* The first step on the road to wisdom in these matters is keeping very straight the distinction between fact and inference. Survey results are often presented in greatly abbreviated, summary form. A useful exercise is to translate them back into what has actually been observed. Suppose you hear that "65 percent of Americans say the President is doing a good job." What this actually means is something like this:

> 1,635 adult, non-institutionalized, telephone-owning residents of the U.S. were chosen by a complicated scheme that makes it very likely that they bear an acceptable resemblance to all such adults. Our interviewers reported that 1,503 were located and were willing to answer questions. Of these, according to our interviewers, 977 said "a good job," when asked: "Do you think the President is doing a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job?" This question followed a series of questions on foreign relations.

The translation, read carefully, mentions the most important of the things that you'd have to know to make sense of the figure "65 percent." Each clause, each phrase, could be the subject of a lecture in a class on survey methods. How many American adults "really" approve of the President's performance is only an inference—some would even say it is a meaningless one and that attitudes only exist as they are expressed in behavior in given situations (like saying "a good job" to a survey interviewer). The *fact* is what a sample of respondents said to interviewers in a particular, somewhat artificial setting, in response to a particular question embedded in a context defined by previous questions. (Actually, it's not even what respondents said—it's what interviewers have said respondents said, as filtered through a mechanical process of recording and coding responses.)

But that *is* a fact. And if 65 percent is higher than last month, or if a higher proportion of young people than of old said "a good job," those are facts, too. Oddly enough, survey research is generally more reliable when it is asking what kinds of people do something, or whether the proportion is increasing or decreasing. Just estimating *how many* people do something would seem to be a relatively simple task, but it is actually one of the toughest. Question-wording, interviewer characteristics, the nature of previous questions, sampling biases—all of these factors can mess up an estimate. But so long as they are constant, they matter less for comparisons between groups, or over time.

Here's a pop quiz, to see if you've been paying attention. In 1942, only 2 percent of Southern whites said that Black and white children ought to attend the same schools; in 1980, only 5 percent of white Southern parents said that they did *not* want their kids in school with even "a few" Black children. Have attitudes really changed from virtually unanimous support to virtual unanimity in the other direction? What do you need to know to answer that question?

I hope it is obvious that we would have to know much more about the studies that produced those numbers before we could even begin to take them seriously. (In fact, the two studies used different sampling techniques, the questions they asked were somewhat different, the later one asked its question only of parents, and the two studies even defined "the South" differently.) Moreover, it is impossible to say how the responses at either time were related to what people would have said in private to close friends. But one thing is certain: what Southern whites tell strangers on their doorsteps has changed. Start with that.

I have only touched on a few of the issues involved in

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evaluating survey research, but, to repeat, it is important to recognize that no one is more aware of these issues, or has done more to deal with them, than professional survey researchers. After all, usually no one has a greater interest in getting it right. Caution is appropriate in dealing with survey data, but it should be an informed caution, not knee-jerk obscurantism. The results of survey research, interpreted with that informed caution, can tell us at least one kind of truth—a truth, moreover, as often comforting as alarming these days. Whether for Bishop Butler's reason or for motives less serenely disinterested, why then should we desire to be deceived? cc

*Anyone who wants to be better informed ought to look at a very readable textbook by Earle Babbie, called *The Practice of Social Research*. (Ignore the dedication to Werner Erhard. Babbie's *Social Research for Consumers* is equally good, and his *Survey Research Methods* is even better. All are published by Wadsworth.) An exception to the rule that college textbooks are watered-down pabulum, *Practice* has been so successful that it is almost certainly used at a college near you. Since Babbie has now retired on his royalties and spends full time bringing out new editions to kill the sales of older ones, cheap used copies are widely available.

THE DOCTORS AND THE BOMB

by Irving Louis Horowitz

The furor caused by the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, represented by its two leading sponsors and leaders, Dr. Bernard Lown of the United States and Dr. Yevgeny Chazov of the Soviet Union, provides a fine opportunity to review the revival of the politics of nuclear weapons in the mid-1980's. The impulse to public service on the part of professional servants runs deep, despite the fact that respectability, or better, professional legitimacy, afforded by good work in one area does not readily translate into other areas. This is a constant source of irritation to people who rise high and are mighty in their own fields, but who are not able to translate such elite status into generalized recognition.

This is not to suggest that the more than 100,000 physicians said to be members of the IPPNW are self-serving or ambitious. Rather, it is to remember that talent, even scientific expertise, in one area, does not guarantee a valid political perspective in another. The most obvious lacuna in the debate over nuclear weapons is the absence of any significant body of public opinion, East or West, which argues the case *for* the use of nuclear arms. Despite occasional bluster, in most real crisis situations, both sides in the Cold War are extremely careful to limit the scope of a given conflict to a nonnuclear range of options. However heated the rhetoric about Nicaragua, Angola, or Afghanistan, there is widespread acceptance that nuclear options are unrealistic. Indeed, nothing so took the wind out of the sails of the Solidarity Movement in Poland as the creeping widespread recognition that nuclear retaliation in support for the workers' movement was simply out of the question.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the IPPNW and the two cardiologists who serve as its cochairmen—Dr. Lown of the Harvard School of Public Health and Dr. Chazov, Soviet Deputy Health Minister responsible for the health care of Kremlin leaders—has nonetheless created a furor. The reason for the concern is a letter dated September 26, 1973, denouncing, in typical Stalinist terms, the peace efforts of Andrei Sakharov, a previous Nobel Laureate. In a tragicomedy played out in front of Western reporters, Dr. Chazov responded to an inquiry about his signing the letter by saying: "I did not expect questions addressed to me to start with this topic." Immediately thereafter, a Soviet reporter, Lev Novikov, suffered a heart attack (from which he is recovering). The two physicians rushed to his aid (Dr. Lown in tears), and the press conference came to a merciful end. Doubtless it was the last such occasion that would embarrass the great Soviet court physician and champion of peace.

The strange taint to the award stems from Chazov's assault on Sakharov, authorized if not written by his Kremlin masters. Protest against Chazov's 1973 letter provided the high drama for last year's peculiar award, one supposed to be noncontroversial because "no one can attack an organization like they can a person." But quite apart from the merciless attack on a previous recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, there remains the question of just what the IPPNW stands for.

To begin with, the name of the organization was chosen with extreme care. The group aims to mobilize the social conscience of medical doctors. The use of a preventative rather than curative language strikes a deep chord with many doctors the world over. On principle most doctors believe that the best medicine is prevention rather than cure. But the operative word is prevention of *nuclear* war—not just war in general. Otherwise, the reality of everyday nonnuclear war would intrude in this organization of social conscience, and the good doctors might become involved in the dirty politics of dirty little wars, like those being waged in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Nicaragua, and in other parts of the Third World. More to the point, hard questions might be raised about Soviet behavior.

Indeed, some of these questions have been frankly raised and answered by Sergei Batovrin, a founding member of the Moscow Trust Group, former inmate of Soviet psychiatric hospitals, who was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1984. He summarizes Chazov's pro forma peace efforts succinctly:

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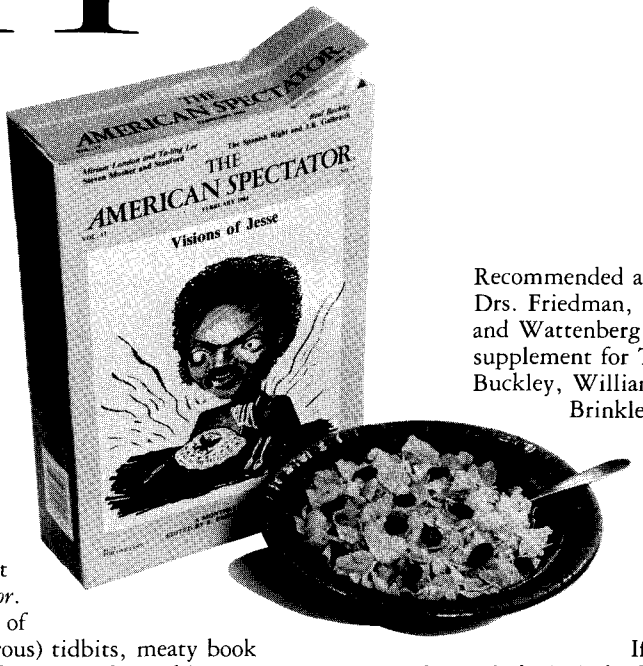

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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

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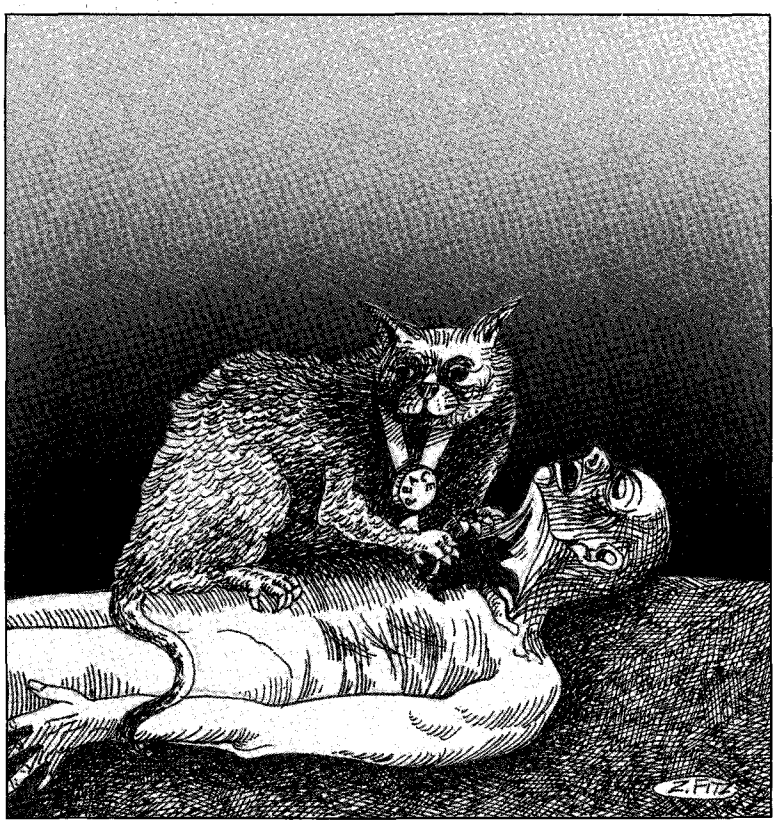
In June 1982, he appeared on Soviet television on an oft-cited broadcast discussing the consequences of atomic warfare. It was an extremely cautious and superficial program, aired in such a way as to guarantee the minimum number of viewers: it was broadcast once, without any advance notice, in the middle of the working day. Much the same thing happened to Dr. Chazov's book, *The Danger of Nuclear War*, published in 1982. The English translation was widely distributed in the West. But the single press run, a symbolic 7,000 copies, printed in Russian, was also exported, insuring the absence of the book from Soviet libraries and book stores. . . . Apart from these two efforts, Dr. Chazov's group has not distributed a single book or published a single leaflet. It has not held a single public lecture or organized a single seminar for ordinary citizens.

Because IPPNW has well-oiled propaganda machinery, we do not have to guess at the reasons for its self-imposed limits, no less than its self-defined scope. Its goals include: (1) An immediate and verifiable freeze upon the production



and deployment of nuclear weapons; (2) Sharp reductions and redeployment of military expenditure and usage of such funds for research, immunization against diseases, and solution to health and food needs of poorer areas; (3) An ultimate ban on nuclear research for military production, and in the short-term, working to create nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world. Its program has the support not only of medical personnel, but of such ardent antinuclear leaders as Andreas Papandreou, the Greek prime minister, who has lent his support and even his reputation to the IPPNW efforts. Papandreou's belief in a socialist state, his condemnation of NATO and support for the PLO, his permissive attitude to terrorism—all of these become irrelevant in the wonderful world of single-issue nuclear disarmament.

The central tenet of the IPPNW position, one constantly reiterated by Bernard Lown, who is not so much a "dupe" of Soviet machinations as chief architect of its organizational program, is to emphasize single-issue politics. That is to say, Dr. Lown's position is to distinguish the issue of peace from that of freedom, and to establish peace as the priority. "We are not indifferent to other human rights and hard-won civil-liberties, but first we must be able to bequeath to our children the most fundamental of all rights, which preconditions all others: the right to survival." While such big words like peace and freedom can easily degenerate into empty sloganeering, the fact remains that the linkage of the two is an essential cornerstone of Western foreign policy in the 1980's, and the heart and soul of Andrei Sakharov's public appeals. The linkage between peace and freedom is precisely what Dr. Lown and Dr. Chazov aim to negate. Indeed, their single-mindedness on the issue equals that of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who argues against Sakharov, that the primary if not exclusive question of the moment is freedom. Thus the IPPNW position strikes at the essentially centrist position of American foreign policy. It is this, not just idle chatter about preventing a nuclear wasteland, that defines IPPNW's primary message to American society.

Dr. Lown speaks with great feeling of the lack of symmetry in the critique of Chazov and the defense of Sakharov: the "unlinking" of peace and freedom is vital for IPPNW. "Whenever one points a finger, he should look in the mirror . . . asymmetry is what gets Russian goats." But of course, this issue of symmetry is at the heart of the matter. No one dares to suggest that Dr. Lown speaks as a U.S. policy representative. No one dares suggest that Dr. Chazov does *not* speak with the full authority of the Soviet government. Indeed, his "hard line" speech given when he accepted his portion for the Nobel Prize suggests that once the charade of neutrality became unraveled as a result of the queries about his petition against Sakharov, it became pointless to take a soft line. And with the gloves taken off, the iron fist of Soviet policy was clearly delineated by the Soviet cardiologist *cum* politician. His attack on the United States' Strategic Defense Initiative was blunt: "Can't we discern it as an attempt to gradually make us accept the idea of weapons over our heads in outer space? The 'space shield' will mean one more step forward toward nuclear catastrophe."

The lack of symmetry inheres in the very essence of the two systems: in the United States tens of thousands of voluntary associations flourish, but in the Soviet Union voluntary organizations (save perhaps the Russian Orthodox Church) are tolerated but not officially sanctioned. Indeed, the lack of symmetry is nowhere more clearly underscored than in the arrest and disbanding of antinuclear protestors in Moscow at the time of the awards ceremonies in Oslo. Whereas "grassroots" politics are simply not tolerated in the Soviet Union, they are at the core of the American IPPNW effort. This utter lack of real symmetry is explained, and

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explained away, as the price the West must pay to hold a nuclear dialogue with the Soviets.

The notion of symmetry, whose absence Dr. Lown decried in media questioning of his Soviet counterpart, constitutes the essential problem in IPPNW. Dr. Lown and his American compatriots can speak in their own voices, whereas Dr. Chazov and his Soviet colleagues must speak in the voice of their political masters in the Kremlin. Thus, all accommodations must be unidirectional: from West to East.

The obvious asymmetries between the two parties to IPPNW is significant because its entire organizational and ideological structure is based precisely on the myth that IPPNW represents one side to an ongoing debate; that its members are somehow single-handedly withholding the arms clock from striking midnight, or as the current rhetorical fashion has it, the nuclear winter from descending on mankind. As a result, platitudes reign supreme, repeating, as theological incantations, the dangers of nuclear conflict, as if a nuclear-war party (invariably identified with the Western democracies) is waiting to unleash nuclear terror upon an innocent and unsuspecting world populace. By keeping discussion at an extremely high level of abstraction, the politics of simplicity replaces any serious analysis of nuclear competition at the level of arms buildup; worse yet, pious platitudes mask the exacting punishment created by everyday, ongoing warfare.

It is not without significance that IPPNW is an "East-West" effort, since were one to look at a "North-South" context, or more bluntly, a Third World context, it would become clear that this concern for preventing nuclear destruction has been isolated from the very real subnuclear or "conventional" mechanisms of military and paramilitary destruction that has become an everyday concern for poor peoples in poor nations. A Western conceit has led us to believe that the problem of development is uniquely restricted to the Third World, whereas the problem of war and peace is confined to the First and Second Worlds. Nothing could be further from the truth. The question of war as practiced is precisely the concern of the Third World—not a question to be solved in the postponable future, but as a ubiquitous contemporary threat. Eight violent conflicts in the world during the past decade were fought in Third World nations. By far, the most devastating has been the Kampuchean civil war, in which estimates of death range from between 500,000 to 4,000,000 (or no less than half the Kampuchean population). The Afghanistan civil war, begun only in 1978, has claimed the lives of between 100,000 and 250,000 people by 1980. A similar number of deaths resulted in the East Timor war. The bitter wars in Lebanon, Vietnam, the Philippines, Guatemala, and Zimbabwe each claimed anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000 lives. The sobering conclusion is that war may be a big power "game," but it is one played by small nations.

Those who inveigh most against employing a worst-case scenario with respect to the stealing of nuclear secrets by terrorist groups think nothing about using similar worst-case scenarios in justifying their essential organizational tasks. Thus, the development of a medical response to nuclear holocaust proceeds along with the need to face up to a "reality of Hiroshima," to avoid the mistake of "denial" and "disassociation" of the danger of nuclear warfare and the winter to follow. Facing "reality" comes to mean that even modest nuclear explosions could spell a Martian atmosphere on earth. The explosion of 5,000 megatons of nuclear exchange would generate fires and create thick clouds of dust, soot, and smoke, which would obliterate the sun in the Northern Hemisphere. The average temperature would drop to below freezing temperatures for at least a three-month period following such a series of explosions. Over a billion people would perish, fresh water would freeze, and medical services would be paralyzed, and life for another billion people would in all probability come to a grinding halt.

Scenarios in which one side wins or loses by surprise, or both sides employ nuclear weapons on a symbolic scale only, or in which a preponderance of advantage accrues to one side or another are treated as nefarious or utopian dreams. They are seen as evasions or even lunatic suggestions of Strangelove-like proportions. Hence, all approaches to civil defense or civil evacuations are regarded as a "cruel hoax." But invariably, the hoax is said to be perpetrated by the United States, while the Soviet Union, which has a much more advanced system of civil defense and evacuation plans thoroughly in place, is remarkably spared such critiques. Thus, any program of action not based on a worst-case scenario is said to be a deceptive effort to reduce public awareness and anxiety. The possibility that such worst-case scenarios are themselves the cause of anxieties and hoaxes is either dismissed or more frequently not considered.

Typical of the IPPNW position are statements like: "One million children can be immunized against the preventable communicable diseases for about a million dollars, the cost of one Pershing II missile." The irritating habit of always mentioning U.S. weapons, and never mentioning their Soviet equivalents, is constant. But when another spokesdoctor for IPPNW, Dr. Howard Hiatt, dealt with specifics, he let the cat out of the bag: the Soviet Union ranks 28th in infant mortality, compared to the United States and the United Kingdom and France with less than half the rate of deaths per thousand. Although Dr. Hiatt tries to gloss over these startling differences by noting that nonnuclear nations like Finland and Sweden and Japan rank lower still, he made no effort to draw the obvious parallel between a Soviet budget for military expenditures twice that of the United States with an infant mortality rate also twice that of the United States.

The equation of the United States and the Soviet Union simply misrepresents and suppresses the work done by Murray Feshbach, Mark Field, and Nick Eberstadt (each independent of each other) documenting the growing Soviet health crisis, traced to a bloated military budget within the framework of an economic performance less than half as capable as that of the United States. The key point that the IPPNW apologists fail to make is that infant mortality in the USSR has risen steeply from 1960 to 1985—to the point that it is now two-and-one-half-times larger than it was in 1960. This stands in marked contrast to the stable-steady condition of this key health indicator in the United States over the same period of time. What kind of "science" will guide further probes into East-West

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FEMINIST ANDROGYNE: THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

by Jane Greer

(After a composite photograph by Nancy Burson, formed by feeding photographs of six men and six women, selected at random, into a computer programmed to merge facial features)

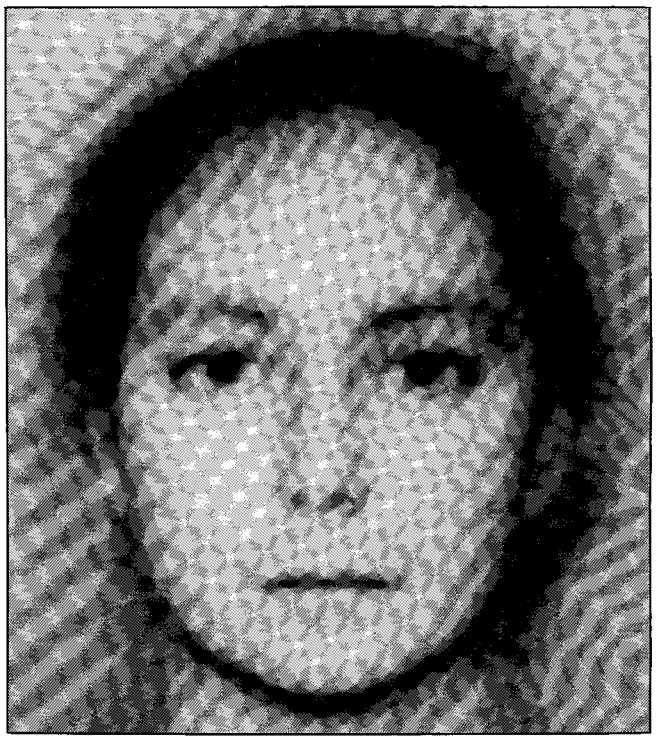
Here on this page I am poured out like water,
child of (times six) my father and my mother,
fruit of adulterated seed, blurred daughter,
born unregenerate—your long-dreamed lover.

Prophet and ghost and cipher, I was made
most digitally: my parents put their heads
together: input, output, I was laid,
clean printout from their cold objective beds.

No vague hermaphrodite, I wrench your breath,
rally those old misshapen, desperate dreams
you thought you'd shed. New snakeskin (sweet false
death!),
they grow back stronger, garment without seams.

Charismatic, mine is a tongue not human;
like smoke or an ill-healed scar, my smudge of hair.
I wear few shadows—yet am wholly woman.
Does that astonish you? Look if you dare,

You who gaze in a mirror and grow blind.
Satan, Adam, Eve in her new-fleshed power;
I am more than kin, my dear, and less than kind—
and what you would give to have me for an hour!



"Androgyny" © 1982 Nancy Burson with Richard Carling and David Kramlich.

differences on key measures of health and welfare, particularly as these differences are affected by nuclear expenditures and other military spending.

It is the oft-repeated presumption of IPPNW that medical personnel have a unique charge to raise the banner of antinuclearism because doctors have made the preservation of life their essential task. The assumption by IPPNW that preventing disease in the first place is infinitely preferable to treating disease rests on a still further metaphysical premise that every illness can be prevented by foreknowledge; which in turn would make life eternal and death infinitely postponable. But these sets of assumptions, however worth exploring in their own right, are rather beside the point.

Doctors no more or less than any other professional group in modern society are charged with the prevention of total destruction. It is no less a charge for lawyers, physicists, or economists (indeed, some other professions have developed their own rationale for pacifism and functional isolation). The moral prerequisites of a profession are operationally limited to the maximum functioning of that profession for the general good. But this does not mean that the general good is uniquely the charge of a single profession. And herein lies the central flaw in IPPNW reasoning: its notion that a concern for the general welfare magically translates into a particular strategy for the conduct of foreign policy. The participation of a select group of physicians in public discourse on the inadvisability of nuclear conflict has no more special weight, and a lot less special knowledge, than the same sort of public discourse undertaken by physicists. Indeed, in the postwar antinuclearism of the 1950's, it was precisely the physicists who made special claims of possessing policy knowledge. These earlier professionals served to split rather than unite the scientific community around the nuclear weapons issue. That the same outcome awaits the present efforts to medicalize the nuclear issue seems a foregone conclusion—even more so since the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize.

It is a measure of the intellectual carelessness of key figures in the IPPNW that they not only insist upon the propriety of the award being shared by a Soviet counterpart, but go so far as to claim that such an act has the implicit sanction of Andrei Sakharov himself. Dr. Loring Conant Jr., one of the key American figures in the IPPNW, noted that "our cooperation with the Soviets through the IPPNW does not imply that we condone their policies on dissidents or human rights abuses." But he further suggested that even Sakharov shares the view that "the human rights issue has to be put into a larger context." Dr. Conant went on to quote from Sakharov's statement (of 1975, not 1980 as he claims) to the effect that: "Despite all that has happened I feel that the question of war and peace and disarmament are so crucial, they must be given absolute priority even in the most difficult circumstances." What Sakharov said immediately after that sentence is conveniently omitted by Conant. And since Conant himself is attempting to enlist the former Nobel Laureate to his position, it seems fitting to give

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WINTER-SPRING TITLES

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June

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William R. Van Cleave

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The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future

edited by Robert Conquest

In Russia, nationalism has become both the principal force holding the USSR together —Russian nationalism—and the principal force tearing it apart—the non-Russian nationalisms. These sixteen essays are not a final and systematic display of answers to the disparate problems inherent in the multi-ethnic Soviet Union and the official Soviet response to the various nationalities. Rather, this volume seeks to cast illumination on the whole matter from a number of directions.

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Edwin S. Mills

No matter how it is measured, governments have been the greatest growth sector of the last century in virtually all high-income countries. And, although the subject is surrounded by controversy, there can be no doubt that the social efficiency and equity, and the flexibility, of a given country's economy depends upon the way its government relates to economic activity. Mills uses the framework of normative (welfare) economics to shed light upon these questions: What should governments do? Whatt do they do? and Why do they do what they do?

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William Lee and Richard F. Staar

Few studies exist on how and why the USSR decides to produce the weapons systems that it does; across the political spectrum, American policy makers wonder what the USSR is up to each time it begins to test new weapons systems. Lee and Staar's basic thesis is that Soviet military doctrine clearly state the reasons for the Soviet military buildup.

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the full citation from Sakharov's "four-stage plan for cooperation":

> Saving mankind from the threat of thermonuclear destruction undoubtedly takes priority over all other problems. But this task cannot be separated from other problems of a political, economic, humanitarian, and ethical nature—and above all from the questions of the openness of a society, of international trust, and overcoming the disunity of the West. Any real solution to the problem of disarmament must include (a) a perfected system of verification, including inspections; (b) a reduction of armaments on the basis of parity to a sufficiently low level (this refers both to negotiations on limiting the strategic weapons of the superpowers and to regional negotiations); (c) elimination of the factors contributing to the arms race; and (d) elimination of the factors fostering strategic instability.

In contrast to the simpleminded, one-sided proposals extended by Lown and Chazov, Sakharov's position strikes a rational, multilateral balance that stamped him as an enemy of the Soviet Union and a pariah to American unilateralists who could not bring themselves to consider Soviet power as no less—and in all likelihood more—of a problem to nuclear disengagement than American strength.

The actual text of the 1973 letter denouncing Sakharov signed by Chazov deserves to be quoted in full. For only in this way can the magnitude of the task in reaching a nuclear rapprochement across political-ideological barriers be properly evaluated.

> We, Soviet medical scientists, are outraged by Academician A.D. Sakharov's behavior, which is a discredit to the honor and dignity of a Soviet scientist, and, together with scientists of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., resolutely condemn his activity aimed against the Soviet Union's peaceful policy. Academician A.D. Sakharov's irresponsible statements to foreign correspondents and his slander against our people and the Soviet Government's foreign and domestic policy have made us feel indignant. We, representatives of the most humane profession, have devoted our lives and activity to the struggle for public health. Any statement aimed against the strengthening of peace and the easing of international tensions sounds blasphemous to us. Together with all the Soviet people, we wholly and completely approve and support the Soviet Union's foreign policy course aimed at the implementation of the peace program. We are proud of the Soviet Union's successes in all fields of the economy, science and culture. The fulfillment of the plans for the development of our state that were outlined by the 24th congress is creating the necessary basis for a further rise in the living standards of the Soviet people and serves the interests of the strengthening of peace throughout the world. Academician A.D. Sakharov, who has lost contact with his own people, does not want to understand this. His activity is fundamentally alien to all Soviet scientists.

Just what did Sakharov say that prompted such a collective condemnation by Soviet officialdom? Here, too, it might be best to have Sakharov speak in his own voice. For in Sakharov's words one can detect the dilemmas which confront Soviet society in its efforts to establish a global nuclear-free environment. If the doctors of IPPNW have done nothing else, they have given us a deeper focus on the prospects for international peace and freedom—and why it is so hard to attain peace without a parallel effort in the Soviet Union and so necessary to retain freedom in the United States. Sakharov has said:

> If an all-encompassing scientific and technological revolution, promising uncounted benefits for mankind, is to be possible and safe, it will require the greatest possible scientific foresight and care and concern for human values of a moral, ethical, and personal character. Such a revolution will be possible and safe only under highly intelligent worldwide guidance. The foregoing program presumes: (a) worldwide interest in overcoming the present division; (b) the expectation that modifications in both the socialist and capitalist countries will tend to reduce contradictions and differences; (c) worldwide interest of the intelligentsia, the working class, and other progressive forces in a scientific democratic approach to politics, economics, and culture; (d) the absence of insurmountable obstacles to economic development in both world economic systems that might otherwise lead inevitably into a blind alley, despair, and adventurism. Every honorable and thinking person who has not been poisoned by narrow-minded indifference will seek to insure that future development will be along the lines of the better alternative. However, only broad, open discussion, without the pressure of fear and prejudice, will help the majority to adopt the correct and best course of action.

That such a modest program was able to generate a rhetorical cascade in defense of Soviet national interests on the part of this year's corecipient of the Nobel Peace Prize is a painful reminder of the road ahead in the search for nuclear peace *and* personal freedom. cc

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COMMENDABLES

The Thousand and One Knights

by Caroline Morgan

Joanot Martorell and Marti Joan de Galba: *Tirant Lo Blanc*; Schocken Books; New York.

Originally published in Catalan in 1490 and now newly translated by David H. Rosenthal, *Tirant Lo Blanc* is a prose masterpiece written by the Valencian nobleman Joanot Martorell and completed by Marti Joan de Galba after Martorell's death. Written when the Catalan influence in Sicily, Rhodes, and other parts of the Mediterranean was still significant, *Tirant* takes the reader into the world of medieval knighthood, festivity, heroic death, and courtly love. Praised by Cervantes as the "best book of its kind in all the world," *Tirant* enthralls the reader in the same kind of ambiguous and sophisticated story telling that we find in *Don Quixote*.

At times, the author gives the reader direct and vivid narrative, while at others the reader's imagination must carry the burden. When several knights dishonor themselves roughly one-third of the way into the book, Martorell simply states that all were punished in the manner earlier prescribed as appropriate in such cases. It is left to the reader to recall the rules of knighthood earlier taught to Tirant, the story's protagonist, and then to imagine the erring knights with their costumes ripped away and hot water repeatedly thrown on their heads.

Feats of arms abound, but prowess with the sword and lance cannot help Tirant resolve the internal conflict between the ideals of the ascetic knight and the passion of a lusty Renaissance courtier pleading for the favors of the Princess Carmesina. Once the action moves from the English court to the exotic bedrooms of Constantinople, the invincible knight proves only too human in the seductive combat of love. In his treatment of sexual passion and its conflict with the needs of society, Martorell's "modernity" surprises and delights the reader.

Rosenthal's translation is superb, deftly conveying both the profundity of Martorell's themes and the verbal playfulness of the style. The translation is so well done that it reads like an original text. My only complaint is that the original names ought not have been translated so literally: "Easygoing Widow," "Dryfount," "Look-what-you-do." I think that most readers would have preferred the Catalan: "Viuda Reposada," "Fontseca," and "Cataquefaras." cc

Caroline Morgan is a drama and art critic in New York City.

Natural Philosophy

Ernst Mayr: *The Growth of Biological Thought: Diversity, Evolution, and Inheritance*; Belknap Press of Harvard University; Cambridge.

At last there is a scientific work that justifies the term natural philosophy. In every discipline there should eventually come a time when it is possible to repeat the words of a great historic occasion in America: the man and the hour are met. Such events are increasingly rare in the sciences, where specialization and barbarity of style almost preclude the broad and humane synthesis that indicates a discipline has come of age. Impossible as it may seem, Ernst Mayr has written such a book on the history of biology in which the main issues are confronted and discussed with such lucidity that no interested reader can fail to follow the argument.

As one of the founders of the neo-Darwinist synthesis, Mayr is among the few living men who can speak with some authority on the development of biological thought. Despite his strong convictions on the usual topics of evolutionary thought, Mayr is generous to the various losing parties and draws our attention time after time to contributions made by vitalists, antievolutionists, and advocates of orthogenesis (the idea that evolution proceeds in some special direction). It is not that Mayr lacks a point of view—far from it. He has made up his mind on every conceivable issue in the biological sciences, but it is just that strength and clarity of his convictions that makes this book the best thing on the subject and, what is more, an excellent introduction to biology. It is a work that should be read by anyone who has even the slightest interest in the most important intellectual revolution in more than a century. cc

IN FOCUS

The Poet as Revolutionary

by Budimir D. Tosic

Juliette R. Stapanian: *Mayakovsky's Cubo-Futurist Vision*; Rice University Press; Houston.

"Every artist," wrote V.I. Lenin, "everyone who considers himself as such, has the right to create freely according to his ideals, independently of everything." Who would have guessed that the author of this noble thought is none other than the originator of one of the world's most repressive social systems! Even the most remote similarity between the ideal and the present Soviet reality is a sheer coincidence. Yet behind this cruel irony lies the secret of the Russian Revolution.

Intimately linked with the Russian Revolution is the life and work of the artist, painter, and poet Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930). The paradox of the Revolution is reflected in the personal tragedy of the artist. It is impossible to talk about Mayakovsky's art without considering the times that produced the artist. Both East and West were exploding in the 1900's with new ideas. The men and women who championed these new ideas sought to abolish established norms and genres in the arts and to overthrow established social orders. Certainly this was true about Mayakovsky. There is no way one can abstract or "subtract" the artist from his work.

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Nevertheless, Juliette Stapanian's scholarly and pedantic study of Mayakovsky's poetry is a remarkable effort in that direction. Relying strictly on an analytical method called "graphic scansion," Stapanian first attempts a step-by-step examination of Mayakovsky's poems and then tries to show that his poetic imagery and technique correspond to those found in cubist-futurist paintings.

To use a modern colloquialism—and Mayakovsky is modern even by today's standards—most of his lyrical poetry is "off the wall." In one such poem that Stapanian has chosen for analysis, "a crazy cathedral" is "galloping" across the horizon of the urbanscape, while the image of Christ has "peeled off" the ancient Russian icon and fled (to safety!). Stapanian wants to "arrest" this free-fancy chain of images and subject it to her analytical scrutiny. So she offers a logical explanation of how, optically, this phenomenon could actually take place as the observer walks in the direction of the cathedral and his own movements are translated into apparent movements of the image of the distant cathedral. But the reader must wonder if this sort of logic is applicable to this kind of poetry—written by a "crazy Russian poet"!

Stapanian finds "a related source of complexity and distortion lies in the equivocal flow of images by the studied displacement of locational references." Mayakovsky, the man of the earth, would have marveled at this lofty tone of literary style. The poet of the "cloud in trousers" and of the "scent of the armpits," who didn't shy away from occasional obscenity, Mayakovsky longed to be understood by everyone, even by the most simple and the uneducated. Obviously this compulsion to be understood is not one of Stapanian's problems. The reader may be tempted to conclude that Mayakovsky exercised good judgment and foresight in committing suicide some 55 years ago: otherwise he would have had to endure such literary (and literal-minded) studies as Stapanian's myopic *Cubo-Futurist Vision*.

The tragedy of Mayakovsky is the tragedy of the Russian Revolution and of the people of the USSR. All that Mayakovsky fought against—the "philistines" and the "reactionary bourgeois" style—triumphed in the official Soviet state. When the Almighty State, ruled by the Central Committee, decided to punish "bad" artists and reward "good" ones, Mayakovsky's fate was sealed. The "apparatchiki" (safekeepers of the revolution) and the modernists were hopelessly incompatible because they were mutually incomprehensible. Not much has changed since.

Yet it is hard not to see a striking resemblance between "socialist realism" and commercialist "photo-realism" in the West. True enough, the two aesthetics serve different masters, but the ultimate goal is the same: salesmanship. In thrall to commercialism and consumerism, art surrenders to a very simple one-two rule: what sells is good, what doesn't isn't. The "verisimilitude" of artistic representation, both East and West, spells out the neurosis of our times. Verisimilitude is a poor substitute for creative authenticity. The ever-so-sterile and deadly imitation of "reality" is a true sign of man's competitiveness with "nature" and of his alienation from himself.

We still need Mayakovsky today; we need his bold spirit of an incorrigible rebel with a cause. We could use his "slap in the face of public taste" and his appeals for a greater integration of the arts and a closer cooperation between artists, across national borders but also across artificial boundaries of different artistic discipline.

It has been 55 years since Mayakovsky's death, but we need to hear his poems once more. In both East and West. cc

Budimir D. Tosic is an artist and architect in Chicago.

BOOKS IN BRIEF—HISTORY

The Maupeou Revolution: A Study in the History of Libertarianism, France, 1770-1774 **by Durand Echeverria; Louisiana State University Press; Baton Rouge, LA.** An intellectual history of the controversy occasioned when Louis XV and his chancellor, René Nicolas Charler Augustin de Maupeou, dissolved the aristocratic *parlements*. Echeverria's valuable study highlights the priority of intellectual movements over merely political initiatives.

The War of the Two Emperors: The Duel Between Napoleon and Alexander, Russia 1812 **by Curtis Cate; Random House; New York; $24.95.** As lucid and engrossing as a historical novel, Cate's account of one of the most disastrous military adventures in history is solidly rooted in documentary research.

An Indian Dynasty: The Story of the Nehru-Gandhi Family **by Tariq Ali; G.P. Putnam's Sons; New York; $17.95.** An unflattering look at the family whose leadership of India for more than three decades has virtually turned India's official democracy into an unofficial monarchy.

The History of White People in America **by Martin Mull and Allen Rucker; Perigee; New York; $5.95.** For *real* history, we turn to an often funny, almost always tasteless, chronicle of the American pariah. There was a time when no one would have seen the joke.

The French Enlightenment in America: Essays on the Times of the Founding Fathers **by Paul Merrill Spurlin; University of Georgia Press; Athens.** A useful compilation of references to French influence on the generation of the Founders, Spurlin's essays are marred by shallowness of research (e.g., failure to recognize Henry and John Laurens as Huguenots with a special interest in France) and an apparent inability to explore the deeper issues.

The Last Stuarts: British Royalty in Exile **by James Lees-Milne; Charles Scribner's Sons; New York.** A thoroughly readable account of the unhappy Stuarts in exile, which would serve to discourage even the most resolute partisans of the King across the water. James Lees-Milne combines painstaking research with a style of considerable grace in this sympathetic account of a tragic royal family.

King Charles I **by Pauline Gregg; University of California Press; Berkeley.** A carefully researched and clearly written account of England's most controversial ruler—King and Martyr or despot and hypocrite. While tracing his inevitable downfall Gregg never loses sight of the man who wanted either to live as a king or die as a gentleman.

Bloody Ivan

by Michael Warder

Henri Troyat: *Ivan the Terrible*; E.P. Dutton; New York; $18.95.

When historians draw up their lists of ruthless autocrats, Ivan the Terrible is usually near the top. When political scientists assert that totalitarianism is not a new phenomenon, they back up their claim with a reference to Ivan the Terrible, the 16th-century leader of Russia who dominated both church and state. This first Czar of Russia is clearly a benchmark ruler.

Russian-born Frenchman Henri Troyat has written an entertaining but sensationalized account of Ivan, depicting his subject as a Russian version of

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the Marquis de Sade writ large. It *is* a matter of record that Ivan ordered and often took part in the torture of thousands of men and women, that he married nine times, and that he killed his own son in a rage. Still, a fixation on Ivan's brutality does not help us understand how he unified Russia with a uniform code of conduct and law, expanded education, created representative assemblies of a sort, reformed and codified behavior within the Orthodox Church, and significantly expanded the territory of Russia. Something more than sadism must account for these accomplishments.

Unfortunately, Troyat explains few of the historical circumstances of Ivan's rule. Unmentioned, for instance, is the rough training that early Russian leaders received at the hands of their enemies, the Tartars and Mongols. These foes were, after all, led by men who would drink from cups made of hollowed-out skulls of their rivals. Even in 1662, 80 years after the death of Ivan IV, Tartars raided the city of Putivl and carried off 20,000 Russian slaves, after finishing their normal raping and pillaging.

Then, too, it should be remembered that torture was a generally accepted means of investigation and punishment throughout "civilized" Europe in Ivan's time. The knout, fire, hanging, beheading, and the severance of limbs were accepted in France and England.

In 1613, France executed an assassin of Henry IV by letting four horses pull him apart, while a large crowd of families watched—eating picnic lunches! The leaders of 16th-century Russia should not be compared to Woodrow Wilson. What we would now regard as simple justice would in those times have been regarded as weakness by many, including the Russian boyars who resented Ivan's reorganization of Russia.

But if Troyat offers too little factual background, he does let us in on Ivan's inner feelings and motivations. We learn, for instance, that "[Ivan] watched [his adversaries] out of the corner of his eye, hating them in silence," and that "he was distressed at his inability to take pleasure in bloodshed. He felt that this was a sort of sexual impotence." It's amazing how far an author can go on just 14 footnotes. Readers distressed by the ways Ivan and Troyat deal with their subjects may soon find themselves reaching for Robert K. Massie's *Peter the Great* and *Nicholas and Alexandra*.

Michael Warder is director of public affairs for The Rockford Institute.

Missionary to the Amazons

by Edward D. Snow Jr.

Dee Jepsen: *Women: Beyond Equal Rights*; Word Books; Waco, TX.

Controversy and intense media scrutiny marked Dee Jepsen's 14 months as President Reagan's Special Assistant for Public Liaison to women's organizations, until she resigned in October 1983 to work for the unsuccessful re-election campaign of her husband, Senator Roger Jepsen of Iowa. President Reagan's extemporaneous remark that "if it weren't for women, men would still be walking around in skin suits and carrying clubs" and the vigorous debate over the perceived "gender gap" made life at the White House challenging for Mrs. Jepsen. Feminists criticized her conservative politics and opposition to the ERA, and (not surprisingly) she quickly became the object of unflattering stories in the *Washington Post*.

Mrs. Jepsen's book, however, does not focus on her time at the White House. Instead, it thoughtfully critiques militant feminism and asserts that women can only discover their true identity in Christianity:

> Some women had been looking for their identity in the wrong place before, only in their husbands and children. Now many merely shifted the search, seeking identity in their work—their careers. True identity is not to be found in either place.

Beyond Equal Rights is not so much a book about women as it is a book about one woman, Dee Jepsen. She allows the reader to confront the difficult choices facing women today by recounting her own story and by introducing the reader to the multitude of women she has dealt with during her life as single mother, homemaker, small businesswoman, senator's aide, and assistant to the President. Born into a poor Iowa farm family at the depth of the Great Depression, Mrs. Jepsen lost her mother at 13. A few years later, she "made the mistake of an early, unfortunate marriage" which produced one child and ended in divorce. After some difficult years, she married Roger Jepsen, himself already father of four. Not long after her second marriage, Dee Jepsen made what she describes as the pivotal decision of her life—accepting Jesus Christ as her personal Savior. And Mrs. Jepsen has needed plenty of Christian charity to turn the other cheek when attacked by the leaders of what Patrick Buchanan aptly describes as "humorless feminism":

> On several occasions, I have been in meetings with

LIBERAL ARTS

Vive le Roi!

We keep hearing reports of a turn to the right among today's college students. Usually, all this comes down to is a lack of proper reverence for Stalin. But last fall, when the students of the University of Maryland went to the polls to elect a new student government, they gave the nod to the school's 13-year-old Monarchist Party, headed by Thomas B. Cooper, "King Tom II." Among the royal allies who also won student-government posts were a queen, a duke, and a chancellor of the exchequer.

King Tom has apparently taken Prince Hal as his model. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, His Royal Highness attributes his recent triumph to a certain aristocratic insouciance: "We don't have any of the little attaché-case-carrying crowd here. . . . Looking like a bunch of drunk idiots was probably our best asset in this campaign."

On matters of policy, Tom II drops English Hal for Ludwig of Bavaria: to deter campus crime, he proposes that a "security moat" be dug around the university, filled with "cold lager": "We felt that any criminal persistent enough to swim through a beer-filled moat is going to be either too drunk or too wet to commit the heinous crimes he had intended." The Monarchists also envision "a whole new era of sporting on campus." Football games will hereafter begin with the royal proclamation "Let the games begin!" Jousting and other "blood sports" will provide halftime entertainment. "We plan on having executions, of course, at halftime, and other criminal punishments—flogging and things like that."

It's the "things like that" which tempt us to hope he extends the blessing of royal government to the whole of this benighted republic. cc

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professional women who could be considered feminists and have seen some among them with joyless, tight-mouthed faces. Their obvious animosity caused me to wonder, Why do you hate me? I don't agree with you on everything, but I don't dislike you.

According to Jepsen, these tough-faced women are becoming exactly like the insensitive, dictatorial men they once found so offensive. Without question or reservation, they believed the feminist argument that if they received a good education, worked hard and had a successful career, they would be happy. They now sense something is amiss in their lives, and that gnawing realization only heightens their anger at men and the world.

Mrs. Jepsen devotes the bulk of her book to testifying of the need for modern women to reject the hate, envy, and greed which infect many feminists and to accept Christ. Unfortunately, the last several chapters bog down in preachy repetition. But the first third of the book, which recounts the history of feminism and outlines the opportunities today available to women, is recommended reading for all veterans of the "sex wars."

Like millions of American women, Dee Jepsen has heard the seemingly contradictory messages: be independent and get married, have children and pursue a career. While sorting through the various messages, she found her answer and is compelled to share it with us. Regrettably, the book doesn't make for particularly compelling or exciting reading, but it does convey a sincere desire to understand the needs of women. Through Dee Jepsen's eyes, we see a neglected side of the women's rights debate. cc

Edward D. Snow Jr. is press secretary for Congressman James V. Hansen (R-UT).

Jolly Good Fellow

by Carl C. Curtis

Sheridan Morley: *A Talent to Amuse: A Biography of Noel Coward*; Little, Brown; Boston; $24.95.

"The more I began to think about and read Coward, the more convinced I became that the history of British entertainment in the first half of this century was essentially the history of his own career." With that observation, Sheridan Morley, drama critic and arts editor of *Punch*, begins his biography of Noel Coward. The remark is enough to make a serious student of the theater set the book aside permanently, for Coward just doesn't seem that special.

Born in 1899 to lower-middle-class parents, he shook the English theater before he reached 25 with his play *The Vortex*—an event as important to the 20's, according to Morley, as Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* was to the 50's. But Coward settled down within the space of a few years to write entertaining drawing-room comedies that displayed his "talent to amuse." Successful he was; but success could not save him from the barbs of the critics who castigated him for his lack of high purpose. To this charge Coward merrily pleaded guilty, admitting, whenever asked, that he had no religion, no philosophy, and no special interest in anything except Noel Coward. He was a long time awaiting critical absolution for his artistic sins.

Like Coward's critics, we expect more of the theater and its playwrights than Coward was willing to give. We want ancient Athens and Elizabethan England, Aeschylus and Shakespeare, passion and catharsis, philosophy and politics. No doubt, we are right to desire nobility and meaning on the stage; only then can the theater truly inform a community and direct it morally.

But we would be foolish to think that we could have that theater permanently with us. The wise critic knows that a Shakespeare or Aeschylus doesn't come along every decade; they are the treasures of millennia. Noel Coward was no Shakespeare; but he was a gifted, energetic, and witty man who knew how to stage a charming and funny play, play its lead, and write its theme song. Morley readily admits that Coward's plays don't always read well; but they perform well (*Private Lives* and *Hay Fever* continue to draw audiences in periodic revivals).

Many of Coward's songs, especially "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" and "A Room With a View," remain enjoyable, partly because they appeal to our nostalgia, partly because they are superbly written. As an actor, Coward was not the best if we measure him by Olivier or Gielgud. But what better tribute can one pay an actor than to say he stole nearly every scene he played in. (As bad a movie as *Surprise Package* was, I still smile when I remember Coward's rendition of the title song.) And for all the vituperation English critics heaped on him, he lived to see his plays revived and hear himself declared the grand old man of British theater.

Morley does a decent but not flawless job in presenting Coward's life and accomplishments. His explicit purpose is to write "a critical theatrical biography," an arduous task even with a less flamboyant figure than Coward; the temptation is to serve up more of the private than the public, and Morley occasionally succumbs to it. Yet the biography falls short of being personal or intimate, mainly because Morley remains silent on the subject of Coward's homosexuality. Coward, who was still alive when Morley began researching the book (originally published in 1969), stated categorically that no mention should be made of this side of his life. Morley complied. In this new edition of the book, he has chosen to leave the matter untouched as Coward wished, even though the playwright has been dead for over 10 years. Such a decision may ensure the integrity of Morley the man; it cannot enhance the reputation of Morley the biographer. The intimate biographer would tell the curious public something about the eccentric and immoral behavior of his subject; the critical biographer would indicate how that behavior affected his work. Morley does neither.

Still, *A Talent to Amuse* is a rewarding book. Morley is a solid critic: he knows Coward's successes from his failures and doesn't mind distinguishing them for his readers. And even though he paints Coward without the moles, he gives us a fair portrait of a man who asked his generation to treat laughter with some respect, and won his point handsomely. cc

Carl C. Curtis is assistant professor of English at Liberty University.

Annus Mirabilis

by Edward S. Shapiro

Robert Kee: *1945: The World We Fought For*; Little, Brown; Boston.

In his State of the Union address of January 6, 1945, Franklin Roosevelt looked to the future with confidence: "The new year of 1945 can be the greatest year of achievement in human history," he declared. "Nineteen forty-five can and must see the substantial beginning of the Organization of World Peace. This Organization must be the fulfillment of the promise for which

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men have died and fought in this war." After the bloodshed of the world war, the world looked with expectation to a new era of peace and international harmony to be guaranteed by the United Nations organization. The great tragedy of 1945 was that it was not to be. Internecine conflict appears to be the endemic state of modern man, and the United Nations—far from serving as a force for peace—has become a forum for the most intense ideological and national hatreds. Indeed, if any one thing symbolizes the frustrated hopes of 1945 it is the pathetic organization to which Roosevelt seemed to attach so much importance.

Robert Kee's *1945* is a sprightly overview of this year, perhaps the most important of our century. It was in 1945 that the bloodiest war in history ended, that the most devastating and inhumane weapon in history was used, and that one of the cruelest dictatorships of all time was defeated. Nineteen forty-five also saw the emergence of the Soviet Union as one of the two major world powers, the eruption of anticolonial movements throughout Asia and Africa, and the acceptance by the United States of a major and permanent role in peacetime international politics.

Kee describes the response of the West, primarily the English, to these momentous developments. Having served in the Royal Air Force during the war and written several volumes in British history, Kee's focus on England is understandable, although American readers might find his emphasis unbalanced. Thus he spends less than two pages discussing the transition in April from FDR to Truman, while he devotes an entire chapter to the British election of July which resulted in Clement Attlee's ouster of Churchill.

Concerned with the perception of the year's events rather than with the events themselves, Kee seeks to show how the war was presented to the public and, in turn, how the man in the street responded to such things as the discovery of German atrocities, the dropping of the atomic bomb, and the wartime economic shortages. For his sources, he turns to the major British, American, and French newspapers and magazines, as well as to the BBC's broadcasts. "My method," Kee writes, "has been to relay the picture which a reader of British and American newspapers and listeners to radio broadcasts might have received. . . . Newspapers, for all their obvious limitations, often preserve details and emphases which can otherwise disappear in the sweep of later overall assessment." Implicit in this approach is the belief that the best way to find out how the war looked to the average person is to read the newspapers and radio broadcasts of the time, and that editorials and letters to the editor and radio broadcasts are an accurate barometer of public opinion.

This approach is at best problematic. The study of public opinion is one of the more arcane branches of social science. Do we really know what the average person thinks of his world, assuming for a moment that it really concerns him, and do we really know the power of the *Manchester Guardian* or the *Washington Post* to mold such thinking? And does it really matter? Does the man in the street have any influence over the elites who shape policy?

Cultural and social historians have argued that a better way to approach mass opinion is through the study of cultural artifacts. Many claim that the movies provide a more accurate picture of public attitudes than the editorial pages of major newspapers and magazines, and that they exert a more powerful influence on these attitudes. Best-selling novels, comic strips, and billboards also provide glimpses of mass opinion. Today, television undoubtedly provides the most complete image of public opinion, and it is also the most influential force in shaping that opinion.

This caveat regarding the relationship between newspapers and public opinion is not fatal to *1945*. If newspapers do not mirror popular thought, they do reflect elitist thinking, and this might be even more important to understand. And besides, *1945* is a good read. cc

Edward S. Shapiro is professor of history at Seton Hall University.

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STAGE

In Search of a Playwright

by David Kaufman

A Lie of the Mind; Written by Sam Shepard; Premiere at the Promenade Theater (December 1985); New York.

"That ever recurring topic, the decline of the drama, seems to have consumed of late, more of the material in question than would have sufficed for a dozen prime ministers . . . "

—Edgar Allan Poe, 1845

"[The 1922-1923 Season is] the first season in a generation not to have been described as the 'worst in years.'"

—Burns Mantle, 1923

"As another season sprouts taproots in American soil, the managements and critics will again declaim on a favorite topic—the need for new American playwrights."

—John Gassner, 1954

"But what about the thousand plays we actually saw? . . . We are sure they are destined for oblivion, certain they represent a falling-off from some vague earlier excellence, ever ready to proclaim the new season we have just sat through as 'undoubtedly the worst within the memory of living man.'"

—Walter Kerr, 1970

When it comes to American Drama, our lack of a respectable literature is a much more perennial and chronic lament than we imagine. With what would appear to be a perverse relish, each generation proclaims that today is worse than yesterday, perpetuating the strain of pessimism and unjustified nostalgia that pervades the record. The ailment is not as new as each generation prefers to think. There is much too little recognition that, like the rest of us, Broadway has been dying since it was born.

The irony in all of this, of course, is that the obstinate pessimism fosters an unrealistic hope. The constant state of desperation encourages the critic to settle for nothing less than the new messiah of American Drama. Our best prospects—indeed our best playwrights—have been crippled by the pressure that comes from premature, extravagant pronouncements. To study the chronicles of American Theater is to notice these two, seemingly opposite, strains at work: the nagging frustration that there is *no longer* a worthwhile playwright as there used to be (finally, we have to ask, When? According to Poe, such was the prevalent complaint 100 years before O'Neill) and the attendant impulse to locate one.

Unsurprisingly, each age appears to have its own potential savior. Beside the persistence of this art-form-in-search-of-an-author mentality, each age has a vested interest in electing someone to the pantheon, to declare its own importance in the great march of theater history. But this tendency has inherent side effects which work against the desired end. So that, with characteristic dispatch, Tennessee Williams is seized very early in his career as the country's first, pure dramatic poet. (To this day, even O'Neill, arguably our best playwright, is considered a flawed writer who consistently strove for greatness but achieved it too rarely, producing cumbersome language instead. As early as 1929, Robert Benchley wrote that "It takes a great deal of concentration on *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape* to keep alive the thought that Mr. O'Neill is America's greatest dramatist. Of course, if he isn't, the question arises, 'Who is, then?' and we scurry right back to Mr. O'Neill, with apologies.") Somewhat later, Edward Albee, even earlier in *his* prime, is apprehended as the genius whose arrival was expected.

Both Williams and Albee were consumed by an unfulfillable promise that had been imposed upon them by the incandescent welcome they initially received. In some bizarre twist of circumstance, perpetrated primarily by the critics, they later competed not against their mentors or the best of their contemporaries, but rather against their younger selves. (Albee did "get some of his own back" with his last Broadway entry three years ago, *The Man Who Had Three Arms*, about a has-been freak who achieved international attention when a third arm appeared on his back, only to lose all the attention when his third arm disappeared as unaccountably as it had arrived. A metaphor for his own genius, *The Man Who Had Three Arms* was as much a curiosity as a critical and financial disaster. It was also an embarrassment for the audience it implicated no less than for the once-great playwright who has not had a real success in over 15 years.)

In his summary of theater in 1985 for the *New York Times*, Frank Rich managed to fit into one sentence the two major tendencies of American theater criticism, a cause for rejoicing in the midst of ongoing pessimism: "Sam Shepard was the year's most spectacular reminder of the durability of the theatrical impulse, regardless of the theatrical industry's hard times." Rich devotes the first third of his discussion to Shepard's newest drama, *A Lie of the Mind*. "Even if there were nothing else to recommend the past 12 months in the theater—and there is much more—*A Lie of the Mind* might lift 1985 above the undistinguished years that have characterized the decade." He continues to argue passionately: "Mr. Shepard, it's increasingly clear, is an artist who has his country in his blood and just can't prevent its spirit from pouring out, in ever more poetic and exuberant forms of expression."

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At this point, would anyone dispute that Sam Shepard is considered our greatest American playwright today? Of course there are peripheral possibilities, contenders such as Mamet, Rabe, Guare, Wilson (about whom, more next month), and lesser candidates in Durang, Norman, Henley. But from all quarters, Shepard seems to have inherited the mantle (dubious to begin with) from O'Neill by way of Williams.

"He is the best practicing American playwright, I think, now that Tennessee Williams is doodling," wrote a less-than-satisfied Stanley Kauffmann in response to the first American production of Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* in 1978. "Sam Shepard caught the first wave of the Off-Broadway revolution in 1964 and rode it further than any of his American contemporaries," explained John Lahr in a critical investigation which went on to reproach Shepard for "[clinging] to the romantic notion that somehow the ragged edges of his plays were authentic, when they were just sloppy." Don Shewey, in his recent biography of Shepard, eliminates all equivocations: "He has no rivals as the most important and original American playwright to emerge since Tennessee Williams."

At the ripe young age of 42, Shepard has more than 40 plays beneath his cowboy belt. But aside from a coterie of early followers, only the last handful of plays appear to "count" in terms of establishing a wider reputation for the author, beginning with *Mad Dog Blues* in 1971, then picking up momentum with *The Tooth of Crime* in 1973, and more or less crescendoing in 1978 with *Buried Child*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize. (On the premise that *Tooth of Crime* was Shepard's consummate achievement, John Lahr felt that the award for *Buried Child* "continued the Pulitzer tradition of honoring the right playwright for the wrong play.")

Although Shepard has probably gained more converts in the past few years than he secured in the first decade and a half of his career, he can hardly be said to have come out of nowhere. Born in Illinois, reared in California, trained in New York, educated at Yale (sort of—his degree is from Mount San Antonio Junior College), and escaping some years ago to England where he wrote *Tooth of Crime*, Shepard appears literally to have come from *everywhere*.

Shepard's ubiquitous background contributes indirectly to the mystique that surrounds him. It also encourages the notion that he is the epitome of the American myth, as defined by the wanderlust that first motivated the pioneer and later typified the traveling salesman. As an early champion of Shepard, Robert Brustein extended the metaphor of the nomad by describing Shepard as an explorer of a different sort, a discoverer of metaphysical terrain: "With Sam Shepard, the American theatre takes a step beyond the Newtonian universe into a world of dream, myth, and inner space." But considering how fertile the dramatic soil was in the 60's when Shepard was cultivating it, and how receptive the marketplace was to innovation, Shepard was not *unique* in being a pioneer so much as in enduring long enough to receive the credit.

The Shepard mystique is predicated on ambiguity. His dramas typically suggest far more than they deliver. But as such, they prove ready receptacles for the theatergoing public and the critics who are desperately and traditionally in search of a playwright.

Perhaps taking notice of the bitter lesson that neither Williams nor Albee was spared, Shepard shrewdly avoided the early attention that they both welcomed. When his *La Turista* premiered at the American Place Theater in 1967 for a four-week run, critics and reviewers were not even invited to attend (this didn't prevent Elizabeth Hardwick from "covering" it in a rave notice—later included as the introduction to the published version of the script—in which she proclaimed it "a work of superlative interest" that contains "the poignant meeting on some pure level of understanding of playwright, director, and actor"). To this day, a Shepard play has yet to play in a Broadway house, where it would reach as many people in a week as it reaches in several months at an off or off-off theater. In the numerous interviews Shepard has granted recently, or 21 years after his writing career began, he acknowledges that he previously evaded interviews.

Even as his physical profile has been appearing with greater frequency on the Silver Screen, eliciting comparison with Gary Cooper, Shepard has still maintained a "low profile" with scrupulous calculation, until recently. Well-armored with Obies and Pulitzers and praise from the right sources, Shepard has finally relented. The critics and reviewers who joined the bandwagon in the mid-70's are barely aware of how inaccessible his earlier work was. Theatergoers who discover Shepard with his newest work, *A Lie of the Mind*, will never suspect that he is touching on the same tired themes that he ostensibly resolved in his last five plays. Each of Shepard's last five plays is concerned with some variation of the family; and each is about as different from the other as an episode of *Dynasty* is, say, from an episode of *As the World Turns*.

Much has been made of how Shepard has continued the O'Neill tradition of dramatizing the tragedy of America through the tragedy of the family. But despite reports to the contrary, Shepard's American family is not yours nor mine so much as it is the one that we *fear* might live across the hall or down the street or in some place we may have visited without ever getting to know any of the inhabitants. Shepard engages our attention by tapping our paranoia and feeding it back to us in quasi-surrealistic stage terms.

Shepard's American family is comprised of amputees (*Buried Child*), thieves (*True West*), wife-beaters (*A Lie of the Mind*), murderers (*BC*), perpetrators of incest (*BC* and *Fool for Love*), alcoholics and deserters (*Curse of the Starving Class* and *ALOTM*), pathological liars and certifiable loonies (all of them). Shepard's America has gone over the brink, and the insane residents on the other side are without relief or without the redeeming significance of Oswald in Fellini's *La Strada* or Boo Radley in Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. His characters have personalities that are murky and transient to begin with, and frequently interchangeable during the course of the play (the brothers in *TW*; the father and son in *COTSC*; the brother and sister who become lovers and the vague role of their mysterious father in *FFL*; the multiple confusions in *ALOTM*). If, via Shepard, O'Neill's American family has come of age, it

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has not lost its innocence or its naiveté so much as it has simply gone crazy.

If, as Frank Rich suggests in his original review of the play, "A *Lie of the Mind* is the unmistakable expression of a major writer nearing the height of his powers," then Shepard is a less viable contender for the title of Great Playwright than we might have assumed. In this, his most recent play —and at four hours, presumably his longest to date—Shepard presents two hapless families, each consisting of four members. When the drama opens, Jake is phoning his brother Frankie from the road to report that this time when he beat his wife Beth, he surely killed her. Immediately establishing a sibling relationship reminiscent of ones to be found in *True West* and the film *Paris, Texas* (screenplay by Shepard), Shepard poses an hysterical or crazy brother with a sane and nurturing one.

In what will become a tedious rhythm and overbearing symmetry, this first scene dissolves into a second which finds Beth, Jake's wife/victim, in a hospital bed, while *her* brother Mike nurses her. With rare exceptions for the duration of the play, the scenes alternate from one family to the other in a contrived fashion. In fact, the mechanical structure of *ALOTM* is more elementary, more obvious, than *any* other play I can think of (had it been created for a Playwrighting 101 course the instructor would have graded it as a clumsy work by a writer of promise). Yet Shepard's message, if he has one, remains as blurry and as deliberately cryptic as usual. The heavy symbolic gestures, the bits of stage business, look like random insertions into the first draft. At best, they justify themselves as beautiful gestures, but they fail to justify the raw material of the play or the tissue that surrounds them.

In effect, *ALOTM* is two discrete plays focusing on two separate families —one in Southern California, the other in Montana—interwoven with obtrusive stitching. Instead of plot, Shepard supplies episodes, vignettes, and long monologues as background exposition and family histories. All is dressed up with countless theatrical moments that typify his plays even as they fail to amount to a coherent statement. A subdued Jake blows the ashes of his cremated father into the air while gazing stage-left at a naked woman (Beth) who is ostensibly hundreds of miles away. Beth's parents ceremoniously fold an American flag, careful that it doesn't touch the ground (Baylor, Beth's father: "I don't know. Just tradition, I guess. Funny how things come back to you after all these years . . . "). Meanwhile Beth is consummating her new relationship with Frankie, Jake's brother and the surrogate of Jake in Beth's eyes. At the same time, stage-right, Jake's mother delights in watching her house go up in flames after she sets the match to it.

ALOTM is an amalgam of a number of Shepard plays that precede it. It is also filled with references to the life and works of Tennessee Williams: Beth making vague, repeated allusions to her having been lobotomized, reminding us of Williams' beloved sister Rose; Jake's father, appearing in absentia as perhaps the pivotal moving force in the play, recalling the paternal Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* who fell in love with "long distance" and abandoned the family; Williams' intended use of music in *Menagerie* to "give emotional emphasis to suitable passages," and Shepard's affected, cinematic use of music here. But rather than borrow superficial traits and devices from Williams, Shepard should have heeded the far more substantial advice of his "Production Notes" or preface to *Menagerie*: "When a play employs unconventional techniques, it is not, or certainly shouldn't be, trying to escape its responsibility of dealing with reality, or interpreting experience, but is actually or should be attempting to find a closer approach, a more penetrating and vivid expression of things as they are." It is also instructive to note that Tom Wingfield (for our purposes, synonymous with Williams) gave us "truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion." In all of his works, Shepard presents illusion as if it were automatically some version of poetic truth.

The major problem with Shepard's dramas is that the themes are never clarified or resolved. Instead, they are kept shrouded in vagueness. Shepard's obsession with ambiguity probably originated with the 60's sensibility of open-ended possibility. When, in *ALOTM*, Beth's mother Meg says, "Please don't scream in the house —this house is very old," this is obviously meant to be a pregnant line— "this house" as America itself, so fragile and maligned that it can topple at any moment. But what is the point, Mr. Shepard? Is this a new or valuable insight? Or is it a comforting cliché fed to us in the guise of a puzzle, encouraging us in our smug desperation.

The legacy of American theater criticism insists that there is always a gap waiting to be filled. It is our grave misfortune that Sam Shepard, the contemporary fill-in, proves more symptomatic of the vacuum than the substance we yearn to fill it with. Despite our better judgment, Shepard has made a virtue out of a liability. By presenting the sort of heavy symbolism that no playwright has gotten away with since Ibsen, and that every self-respecting playwright—including Williams and Albee—had taken pains to avoid, Sam Shepard evidently satisfies the contemporary band of hungry critics, always anxious to locate a messiah today who can be crucified tomorrow. Shepard's gimmick is his dressing up the emperor in old clothes; but it's so long since we've seen this style of finery that the garments look new to us. Whether the clothes are new or old, the point is that our generation has more to learn from nursery rhymes of yore than from a play by Sam Shepard. cc

David Kaufman is a theater critic in New York City.

Sympathy for the Devil

by Arthur Eckstein

Abbott Redux

One would have thought to have heard the last of Jack Henry Abbott. Back in the early 1980's, you'll remember, Jack Abbott was a literary *cause celèbre*: here was a great, lost writer, condemned to an unending and unfair prison term, but discovered and redeemed by Norman Mailer. True, Abbott had murdered a man in prison. But Mailer assured us of his wonderful talent; and anyway, the

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murder was attributable to the brutalization caused by the American prison system itself: Abbott's letters, published as memoirs under Mailer's guidance, bore the ideological title *In the Belly of the Beast*.

For a certain circle of East Coast *literati*, Abbott soon became an irresistible symbol of their own alienation from American bourgeois society and values: ensconced in their Central Park West apartments, they too suffered "in the belly of the Beast." So it wasn't too long before the political pull of Mailer and others won Jack Abbott an early parole from prison, and entrance into a halfway house in New York City. The idea, presumably, was that in this gentler, more humane environment, Abbott's literary genius would be freer to create. But he didn't create. Instead, within a few weeks of his release to the halfway house, Abbott killed again. This time he knifed a waiter in a bar during an argument over the use of the bar's toilet facilities. Abbott fled, but was eventually recaptured, tried, and sent back to prison; he was later seen on *60 Minutes*, making racist remarks to Ed Bradley.

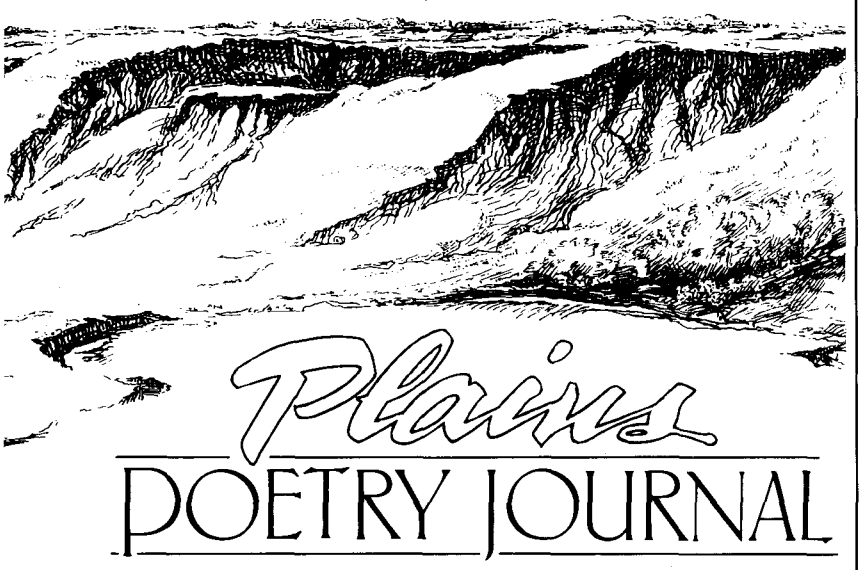
The symbol of alienation had turned out to be a very real, and a very dangerous, human being. But the only irreparable damage done was to Abbott's victim, the waiter: Richard Adan, only 22 years old, and (it turns out) a promising playwright himself. It is Adan's death which transforms what otherwise would be a delicious high comedy of American literary life into a bitter tragedy. Adan's relatives were understandably outraged when they learned of the unusual sequence of events that had led to their son's death at the hands of Jack Abbott—outraged at Abbott, at Mailer, at the penal system's susceptibility to fashionable political pressure.

But what was truly shocking was Mailer's attitude. Although Mailer had taken the precaution of hiring bodyguards to protect himself when he learned that Abbott had killed again and was on the loose, at the trial for Adan's murder Mailer proclaimed that Abbott still deserved our deep understanding, that he should not be locked away forever, that genius ought to be allowed some privileges.

Incredibly, Mailer's view on the matter seems to have prevailed—at least in Washington. Last June and July, a theatrical *dramatization* of Jack Abbott's memoirs played—to rave reviews—at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the most prestigious and lavish setting possible. Entitled *In the Belly of the Beast*, the play focuses on Jack Abbott, portraying him in his own words. Predictably, the play (adapted and directed by Robert Falls of Chicago), takes as its theme the victimization of Jack Abbott by a heartless American society, particularly the American prison system. Abbott's final words in the play are "Anger always burns inside me." Abbott may be portrayed as menacing, but he is also portrayed sympathetically. And it is instructive here how much dramatic energy is spent on searching out the essential humanity within Jack Abbott (compared by one ecstatic reviewer to Sophocles' Oedipus), while an eviscerated victim is presented only *symbolically*—by an old mattress with its stuffing spilling out.

In the Belly of the Beast has finished its run in Washington now, but the play undoubtedly will be appearing in other cities around the country—as soon, that is, as it returns from its London engagement. Meanwhile, certain writers have found Jack Abbott's memoirs so attractive that there is actually a *second* theatrical version of *In the Belly of the Beast* currently making the rounds. This separate second version of Abbott's memoirs originates in Los Angeles, but its basic theme is naturally the same: the plight of Jack Abbott. With Abbott back in intellectual fashion, perhaps we should begin to steel ourselves for a production of *In the Belly of the Beast* on PBS.

Now, it is possible that Jack Abbott really was brutalized by the American prison system (where conditions are horrible and getting worse all the time). But it is at least equally possible that Abbott was, from the beginning, simply a very clever and uncontrollable psychopath. We must wonder how he could possibly have felt "victimized" by Richard Adan or why he felt justified in killing him. We must wonder, too, how much Mailer understood Abbott and how much Abbott simply manipulated Mailer. Mail-



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er vouched for Abbott's talents as a writer, but nothing has appeared since Abbott's memoirs (and rumor has it that Mailer had a very large hand in those). One thing *is* certain, however: Jack Abbott is a killer.

It says something about the state of our national consciousness (and conscience) that this killer is once more permitted to tell his story, to strut across the national stage, to be the focus of sympathetic attention—even after he has killed *again*. This incident shows how powerful (and how persistent) are those cultural forces which seem bent on creating an American society intellectually and morally incapable of defending itself. What satisfaction Jack Abbott must draw from knowing that his story is again being enacted before large, receptive audiences in the nation's capital and elsewhere. As for the relatives of Richard Adan, one can only wonder how *they* feel now. But then, thugs are so much more intriguing than their victims.

Cheerleaders Deserve to Die

In June 1984, in the prosperous Bay Area suburb of Orinda, just across the hills from Berkeley, Bernadette Protti murdered Kirsten Costas. Despite Bernadette's later confession, much about the murder remains obscure. Kirsten Costas was a cheerleader and a swimmer, popular with the most prominent students at Miramonte High. A new transfer from a parochial school, Bernadette Protti desperately wanted acceptance at Miramonte, and had, in fact, found it. She was a member of the same "in" service group as Kirsten, and though she was less well-off than many students at Miramonte, she was hardly poor. Kirsten Costas disliked her, however. On the night of June 27, after a confrontation in a church parking lot, Bernadette trailed Kirsten home and brutally knifed her to death on her front porch. Bernadette thereupon drove her gold Pinto back to her family's house, washed the knife and put it away, and went with her mother to walk the family dog.

Over the next few days, as the Miramonte High community reeled over the news of Kirsten Costas' murder, Bernadette Protti proved a tower of strength to her distraught friends: "We mustn't let this get us down; we must go on." The result was her election as secretary of the service organization to which she and Kirsten had belonged, which post she accepted with suitable modesty. In the months after the murder, boys also began calling Bernadette for the first time—and she started dating steadily. Police at first regarded Bernadette as a strong suspect, since a gold Pinto like Bernadette's had been seen leaving the murder scene and since she knew Kirsten—but she passed a lie-detector test with flying colors.

In other words, Bernadette Protti made a rapid and successful adjustment to being a killer—if anything, she blossomed in the months following Kirsten Costas' death. Evidently, Bernadette completely suppressed the emotional and physical reality of what she had done: "I was really good at blocking it out of my mind, and I still am." Alternatively, she blamed Kirsten: "She never liked me. . . . I have a lot of inferiority feelings, and really bad feelings about myself, people sent out messages and stuff, and just all that stuff, and she just seemed to sort of represent it . . . she could be really mean to loners and geeks . . . I remember mean things about her, but I couldn't ever think it was her fault. . . . I just got angry, I guess."

In the end, the local police, completely baffled, had to call in the FBI. Six months after the murder, when she knew the Feds were closing in, Bernadette finally confessed.

As revealed in her actions and in the quotes from her confession, the personality of Bernadette Protti seems vaguely familiar. The total self-centeredness, the total self-pity, the refusal to believe in the reality of other people, the ability to *kill* because of some imagined slight, and then to forget about it (or blame the victim), the total lack of remorse—all this seems reminiscent of the very dangerous Jack Henry Abbott. Especially disturbing is the fact that Bernadette Protti was able to remove herself from reality far enough to pass a lie-detector test so successfully that she was dropped from the list of suspects in Kirsten Costas' murder. Psychologists therefore could marshal reasons for suggesting that Bernadette Protti was a severely disturbed person. In fact, it is disconcerting—but all too predictable—that because of technicalities in California law, Bernadette Protti will be out on the streets again in three years, age 20. Let's hope none of us meet her—or "offend" her in some way.

However, these all-too-obvious—if tragic—conclusions are not the ones you'll find in Randall Sullivan's account of the murder last July in *Rolling Stone*. Sullivan finds two culprits in the tragedy. The first and the most important: bourgeois American society, as exemplified in upper-class Orinda. Miramonte High is indicted as a highly competitive environment, where striving for excellence is the norm and is fostered by achievement-oriented, highly successful parents. Showered with the material rewards of their parents' success—the best clothes, the best stereos, the most expensive sports cars, ski weekends, European vacations—the students at Miramonte naturally tend to be materialistic and to judge people by appearances. And, as is fitting in a high school which sends its graduates on to the Ivy League or Stanford, preppie is in, punk is out. Sullivan argues that it was this living hell, this amplified version of bourgeois materialism and competitiveness, which produced Kirsten Costas' murder. He quotes approvingly the words of one critic of Orinda society: "The attitudes of the parents in this community are being visited on the children."

Explaining the murder of Kirsten Costas via pop sociology and using the crime as an occasion for sermonizing against bourgeois culture is about what we have come to expect from *Rolling Stone*. But Miramonte High, frankly, doesn't sound all that different in its social and sexual tensions, and cliquishness, from the California high school I attended—a high school which was noticeably less bourgeois than Miramonte. I suspect that these things are probably inherent in any school environment crammed with hormone-driven, anxious adolescents (even, one dares to suggest, "socialist" ones). If Sullivan's social analysis were correct, and Bernadette Protti's murder of Kirsten Costas is to be blamed on the vicious competitiveness and materialism of the surrounding society, the reader could only wonder why the Miramonte campus does not look

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like California's version of Beirut. But in fact this was the first murder in Orinda (population 17,000) in seven years.

The second villain indicted by Randall Sullivan turns out to be Kirsten Costas herself. Given that the killer has told her side of the story in great (if incoherent) detail, while her victim must remain silent, it is perhaps inevitable that a writer in search of a story would adopt the killer's point of view. Even more than the producers of *In the Belly of the Beast*, Sullivan has surrendered to this murderous illogic. Kirsten Costas, we are told, was nasty, competitive, gossipy, shallow, obsessed with material goods, appearance, "popularity." Every kind of criticism dredged up against her is accepted at face value. Even if all the unflattering details were accurate (which we may surely doubt), the picture that emerges is really that of a rather ordinary, insecure teenager: very few 15-year-olds remind us of Albert Schweitzer. And the hard fact remains that Kirsten Costas never killed anyone. Kirsten's parents, having suffered through her murder, now must see her memory trashed in a national magazine.

Sullivan's harsh treatment of Kirsten is all the more striking in view of his descriptions of her killer, which verge on panegyric: Bernadette Protti was sweet, strong, intelligent, very sensitive to the pain of others(!), a beloved babysitter—"'and she was a really good writer, too,' Kris Johnson said." No wonder, then, that Sullivan presents the brutal slaying of Kirsten Costas at the hands of Bernadette Protti as a tragedy for *Bernadette Protti*. (Indeed, in view of her supposed writing talent, perhaps Sullivan ought to put Bernadette in touch with Norman Mailer: she seems to meet his basic qualifications for genius.)

The intended impact of Sullivan's article can be seen in the majority of the responses it elicited last September in the "Letters" column of *Rolling Stone*. "When I began reading, I felt great sympathy for Kirsten Costas, and thought what a monster Bernadette Protti must be. By the end of the article, however, I felt compassion for Bernadette. I am in no way condoning what Bernadette did. . . . " "I would like to commend Randall Sullivan on his article . . . which provided considerable insight into the pressures that

REVISIONS

Facts of Life

A scientific study of human society has only been attempted seriously in the past 100 years. It is true that a number of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment intellectuals—Condorcet, St. Simon, Comte, Hegel and Marx—attempted to formulate historical laws, but none of these protosociologists put their disciplines on a firm footing. Some of them were capable, like Comte and Marx, of stunning insights. But it was not until Max Weber and Émile Durkheim that one could speak of a science of society.

In its essence, sociology owes more to Durkheim than to anyone else. He not only established a school that included luminaries like Marcel Mauss, but he devoted much of his efforts to creating a "metasociology" that established the independence of his discipline both from psychology and from biology. It was Durkheim's insistence on the realm of "social facts" which liberated sociology (and anthropology) from bondage to other fields.

But if society was to be independent of biology, then mind would have to be independent, somehow, of brain—a conclusion Durkheim cheerfully embraced. There was a price to pay for this independence: sociologists and anthropologists increasingly turned their backs on the scientific paradigm which dominated research on the social life of every other species. While they might not admit it to themselves, most social scientists have been far more anti-Darwinist than the state of Tennessee or William Jennings Bryan. Even in the 1970's and 80's, when an evolutionary perspective began to make inroads into anthropology, sociologists turned a deaf ear to the new synthesis of sociobiology. The biggest exception to this generalization is Joseph Lopreato, whose *Human Nature and Biocultural Evolution* (Allen and Unwin; Boston) is the first major attempt to work out a sociological theory that takes account of evolution. While Lopreato was assimilating evolutionary biology, the "founder" of sociobiology, E.O. Wilson, was revising his basic theory in collaboration with Charles J. Lumsden. Responding in part to charges that sociobiology was a simplistic genetic determinism, Lumsden and Wilson proposed a theory of coevolution which provides for the interaction of genes and culture: "Culture is generated and shaped by biological imperatives while biological traits are simultaneously altered by genetic evolution in response to cultural innovation." Working independently, Lopreato has come to the same conclusion, and his book is an attempt to apply "biocultural evolution" to a whole array of social structures and institutions.

It was no easy task, and Lopreato's prose sometimes shows the strain of his efforts to swallow whole and assimilate an enormous range of theory and research. Still, someone had to make the first effort, and Lopreato has done a more effective job than anyone should have imagined.

It would be foolish to attempt a summary of this vast synthesis. In general, it is biology reinterpreting sociology and vice versa. Confronted with the vast amount of evidence on cultural universals like marriage and social status, Lopreato takes the plunge and assumes, tentatively, there is a genetic basis. Somewhere in France, the ghost of Émile Durkheim writhes in agony, but after Lopreato there will be no excuse for sociologists who refuse to relate "social facts" to the facts of evolutionary biology. cc

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exist in our upper-middle-class suburban communities. . . . " And the most fatuous: "I'm glad the law will give Bernadette Protti a second chance. I pray she'll discover that, as time goes on, life gets better."

It was left to a schoolmate of Kirsten's to restore some semblance of moral balance. "The reader is led to believe that society 'made' Bernadette do what she did. We are led to believe, if only for a moment, that Kirsten *deserved* what she got, because you portrayed her as being a white suburban snob. I think your article skimped on one very important point . . . a normal person does not stab a fellow classmate to death because of high-school pressures and low self-esteem. The murder was an unfair tragedy for Kirsten Costas, not Bernadette Protti."

Out of the mouths of children. Unfortunately, feature articles in *Rolling Stone*—and acclaimed productions at the Kennedy Center—exert far more influence in defining the moral and intellectual moods of our national leadership than does Kirsten's teenage defender. As long as influential thinkers allow their misguided romanticism to blur the dividing line between good and evil—or permit pop sociology to deny the importance of individual responsibility—for so long will the advance of barbarism continue. cc

Arthur Eckstein is professor of history at the University of Maryland.

SCREEN

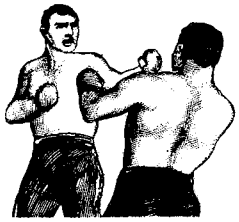
Roundhouse Marxism

by Paul Gottfried

***Rocky IV*; Written and directed by Sylvester Stallone; United Artists.**

There is danger in reading too much into popular entertainment, particularly into a film that was obviously thrown together to extend Sylvester Stallone's string of money-making movies. The *Wall Street Journal* may be correct in saying that this latest blockbuster is mostly a tiresome rehash of its predecessors. All of them, including this one, roll on, through slovenly dialogue, to a climactic bloody contest between Rocky and a predestined opponent. In a formula that goes back to *The Odyssey*, the good guy wins (or nearly wins in *Rocky I*) only after enduring a savage beating. In *Rocky IV* Stallone predictably moves toward the fated struggle with a Soviet giant who has been pumped with steroids.

There are a few changes, however. Rocky and Adrian have definitely moved up in the social scale. The Adrian of *Rocky IV* is not only eight years older, but better poised and more verbal than the one in *Rocky I*. According to my eldest daughter, Rocky and his wife look less "klutzy" in their suburban mansion than they did in the tenements of North Philadelphia. Wealth obviously suits them, even though it has not helped Rocky's diction.



Although my major reason for seeing the movie was to relieve my wife's headache by taking the children out, two unexpectedly strong scenes caught my attention. One takes place in a Las Vegas hotel, just before the Russian boxer fights an exhibition bout in which he kills Apollo Creed. The hotel auditorium teems with high-livers, garishly dressed and waving American flags. It is the world of hedonistic, degenerate capitalism that is depicted here. The American boxer enters the ring mockingly self-confident and dressed in red, white, and blue but woefully unprepared for his fight.

The auditorium in Moscow where Rocky later fights is strikingly different. The plainly dressed spectators look severe; all around loom the obligatory pictures of Marx and Lenin and large red stars. To emphasize the nationalist message, Stallone places the entire Presidium among the spectators and shows Gorbachev responding to the action in the ring.

But these touches seem less significant than the effect of having a towering poster of the Soviet boxer unrolled above the crowd. Gazes become instantly riveted, and the spectators cheer wildly. Looking at the poster and the elated spectators singing the Soviet anthem, the moviegoer can feel something of the power of the Marxist-Leninist view of reality. I doubt that Stallone grasped the full import of this. In fact, he moved quickly beyond that key scene to the dreary fight and to a tasteless speech by Rocky at the end of his match about Americans and Russians both "having to change."

Yet, for one moment Stallone succeeded in portraying the awesome emptiness of the Marxist vision: the worship of brute matter without spiritual content. The poster of the massive human hulk is not a clumsy or failed approximation of classical art. Nor is it the Soviet counterpart of American commercial drawing. It is a vivid statement of an entire belief system that goes back to the attempt of the young Marx to revive the ancient materialist philosophy of Epicurus. Marx's war against the "fraud" of religious belief has produced a far more bizarre mythology than anything which he attacked in the ancient or Christian world: the artistically sterile, dehumanizing myth of matter and physical energy triumphant over spirit. This myth finds appropriate expression in the glorified depiction of farm tractors and of scientifically trained athletes —just as Michelangelo expressed his Christian Platonism through his sculpted biblical and pagan heroes. Unlike Michelangelo, however, who spoke of "freeing" the divinely given form trapped in stone, the Soviet state teaches the sole reality of the material.

It may be significant that Rocky's Black trainer wears a cross when he goes to the Soviet Union. Rocky himself kneels in prayer before he begins his fight against the robot-like Soviet boxer. Although Stallone is not telling us of any voice proclaiming "In this sign you will conquer," he is dropping a hint. The life of upscale capitalism may not be enough to ensure our survival as a culture or world power. Something more may be needed, as T.S. Eliot reminded us, to shore up against the ruins. cc

Paul Gottfried is author of The Search for Historical Meaning: Hegel and the American Right *(Northern Illinois University Press).*

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Letter From New York

by Leo Raditsa

Whose Voice Counts?

"I am teaching you to use a tool more deadly than a pistol." This is the message beginning journalism students hear from an instructor who spoke last year at a conference on "Our Enemies' Use of the Media," sponsored by Accuracy in Media. In a world of Goliaths, count *Accuracy in Media* as one of the Davids of our time. This handful of men have shown over and over again the incapacity of television networks and newspapers to remember simple facts. Recently, it was only AIM's complaints that forced ABC's *Good Morning America* grudgingly to retract its claim that Lenin overthrew the Czar instead of the democratic government of Kerenski—only an American would call this entire series of events "the Russian revolution," and only an exile from Russia like Lev Navrozov would remember the facts. The lives of millions depend on the memory of such facts. Weapons are useless without such memory.

The professional journalists at the AIM conference insisted that incompetence, not bad faith, made the media reckless. They readily admitted that Soviet journalists (identified by defectors as KGB agents) receive better training in languages and the history of the countries they cover. This casual admission of incompetence made me uneasy. "Other peoples' misery is an opportunity for us journalists," Edwin Diamond, who writes on media for the *New York* magazine, remarked. But surely he knew reporting disasters does not cause them—in fact accurate reporting helps prevent man-made calamities. Michael Pakenham, the editorial page editor of the *Daily News*, reminded us of the necessary imperfectness of institutions in democracies. Beautiful words. But he did not mean them. He used them to accuse the critics of media in free countries of envying the perfectionism of totalitarian regimes—as if there were no difference between criticism and the utopian lust that most of all dreads doubt.

The professionals also admitted that terrorists and their victims manipulate the media to keep governments from risking the use of force: from June 15 to June 30 the networks devoted more than half the evening news to the seizure of the TWA hostages in Beirut. Sixty percent of the images were of grieving families—"the pornography of grief," George Will calls it. Diamond casually admitted that he would yield to terrorist blackmail to save his family—though writers from the Gulag say such surrender never works. These professionals seemed to want to convince us they knew no shame. How can they feel shame while they remain confident that their errors will never be criticized in media of equal circulation—their ring of Gyges? Unacknowledged shame was palpable.

The criticism of independent writers went deeper than the self-criticism of the professionals. Irene Boden Leacock, leader of the "Nicaraguan Miskito Indian Women of the Resistance," a woman whose unassuming simplicity and beauty makes lying unthinkable, marveled that the barefaced lying of communist leaders like Ortega in Nicaragua escapes challenge by Western journalists intent upon exposing the minor duplicity of American politicians. In support of her point, Reed Irvine remarked that most American newspapers had not bothered to check and deny a Soviet assertion at a Geneva-Summit press conference of recent attacks on 350 synagogues in the United States. John Rees, an editor of *Early Warning*, contrasted the lavish attention newspapers pay to Nelson Mandela, who has not renounced violence, to their silence concerning the murder of Bartholomew Hlapane, a former South African Communist Party member, and his wife, and the crippling of his 15-year-old daughter, in South Africa in 1982, three months after he had testified before the United States Senate's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism. They rarely mention that the African National Congress is a Marxist-Leninist organization with Soviet-trained terrorists under KGB control.

Peter Rollin's new film *Television's Vietnam: The Impact of the Media* provided the pith and marrow of the AIM conference. This film brings back events of 17 years ago: the Vietcong attacks throughout South Vietnam at Tet and the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968. It shows participants then and now in a contrast that works on viewers like a dream. For that past is half forgotten and at the same time just beneath the surface of consciousness: General Westmoreland now remembering in the uneasy comfort of civilian clothes and in battle fatigues wandering about the American Embassy in Saigon in 1968 to make sure the Vietcong had not broken into the building, as the media had reported; a soldier who had returned to Khe Sanh after a month's leave in the United States retells his bewilderment at the contrast between the effective resistance he knew (199 Americans killed in action, 1,600 wounded; 9,000 to 14,000 Vietnamese dead) and the intimations of a defeat on the scale of Dien Bien Phu in the press and television at home. A former high Vietcong official, now in exile in the West, explains communist strategy: "Fight and Negotiate. Fight and Negotiate." He means the alternation of violence with the raising and disappointment of the enemy's yearning for settlement in order to break his will—a strategy not unlike the technique for "reeducation" in totalitarian concentration camps. The communists realized that Tet had brought them a military defeat in South Vietnam but had secured the political victory in the United States necessary for eventual conquest of the South. You can win on the battlefield

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and lose a war.

The film makes viewers concentrate on what actually happened in order to contrast it with contemporary accounts. This is real history. Over and over again you ask yourself, Why didn't anybody say this at the time? The authors of this film do not think that now, 17 years later, it is too late to go back to see what actually happened. They understand that until we confront the facts we will not be able to see what is going on now all around us: in Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Phillipines—and that is not the end of the list. Only this sort of concentration on facts can overcome the polarization of ideological recrimination. Such facts could precipitate a crisis in the nontotalitarian left among those who allowed themselves to be misled in those years—but such facts could also pave the way for a future consensus. The long silence among the nontotalitarian left shows that many there are groping for a way out.

Rollin's film does depart from the known into the speculative when it depicts the media's distorted representation of the Tet Offensive as the reason for Johnson's decision on March 31, 1968, not to run for reelection. We cannot know the effect of media on Johnson. But we do know something much more important: Johnson never challenged the media's interpretation of Tet. (See Peter Braestrup's *Big Story* [Yale University Press, 1977].) Johnson never used his facts, the battle reports of American officers and American intelligence, to refute the media's account. He never tried. It would have been much better to try and lose than not to try at all. In this defeat, the government's silence is perhaps more important than the media's distortions.

And the government's silence only deepens: without any American lives directly at stake, President Reagan did not face the media with a word of support for Israel's attempt to deal with the situation in Lebanon in 1982. How can any government deal with a world that has always been dangerous but is now even more dangerous because so many people who wish it safe lack a voice? And this silence persists at the same time that four out of five media stories come "from above," from the government—as one of the participants at the conference pointed out. No wonder the media are so suspicious of governments: dependency does not make for self-respect.

The United States, as Arnaud de Borchgrave, editor of the *Washington Times*, pointed out in a speech at lunch, is the only free country without a two-party press—with all its major media more or less in agreement. With some newspapers critically loyal to it, the government might find its voice. Can you have a two-party government without a two-party press? cc

Leo Raditsa is professor of classics at St. John's College and a former editor of St. John's Review.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Birthday Thoughts

Some folks in these parts—maybe in yours, too—were dismayed when the Congress awhile back whooped through a national holiday on Martin Luther King's birthday. That one of Dr. King's close associates was in all likelihood a card-carrying Commie had just been documented in a book by David Garrow (who somehow contrived to view that fact as a criticism of the FBI). My senior senator, Mr. Helms, didn't like that one damn bit and argued that the reverend doctor was not the sort of American who ought to be honored with a holiday.

This kind of thing is why some of us find our senator endearing: he always stands up for his principles without considering political advantage, good taste, or even common sense.

"There is a higher truth, beyond the merely empirical." I wrote that in this magazine once, and nobody wanted to argue about it then. For Senator Helms to put the historical facts on the record did no harm, of course: later generations may wish to consider them. At least in the short run, though, those facts were rather beside the point, which was to welcome Black Americans into full citizenship by giving them what Columbus Day has become for Italian-Americans, or St. Patrick's Day for Hibernians.

Nobody likes a party pooper. From his experience as a critic of Abraham Lincoln, our mutual friend Mel Bradford could have told Jesse that. Whatever the amalgam of good and bad, wise and foolish, in Martin King's actual, empirical character, he was a great leader of his people. Like Lincoln, he has become a symbol of the cause he led; criticism of him is now taken to mean opposition to his cause—and often rightly.

In any case, those who disapprove of his holiday will have their revenge soon enough. It can't be long now until the same people who have trivialized George Washington's birthday get to work on Dr. King's:

"Stock up on sheets during the MLK Birthday White Sale . . . "

"Free at last? Not quite, but greatly reduced . . . "

"I have a dream: Twenty percent off all items in the store . . . "

That sort of thing. When it happens, it should surprise no one. It will be entirely in keeping with ads that show little George with his hatchet going around cutting prices.

Anyone who feels there is a false analogy here—that some intrinsic difference between George Washington and Martin Luther King will protect the latter's memory—should consider what our culture has done to yet another winter birthday, the one we celebrate on December 25. The festival of conspicuous consumption that Christmas has become is enough to bring out the Puritan in even a lackadaisical Anglican like me.

There's no point in whining about "greed." Although the sheer *effrontery* of our commercial civilization has driven many sensitive but weak-minded souls into the arms of anti-democratic movements of both left and right, the alternatives, without exception, have proven to be worse. We simply have to accept the fact that the manifold blessings of freedom come at a price. Fish got to swim, birds got to fly—and merchants got to sell things.

And don't get me wrong: when I want to buy something, I'm glad they're there. If sometimes they get carried away—well, they wouldn't do that if it didn't pay. The appropriate response to commercial excess is not to

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outlaw it, but, if possible, to make it unprofitable; failing that, to ignore it.

There is something to be said against the public observance of Martin Luther King's birthday, and the same could be said about Washington's birthday, or Our Lord's: the worth of these exemplary figures doesn't depend on Caesar's recognition, and their commemoration shouldn't depend on his favor.

That's too rigorist for me, though. If Caesar wants to recognize these holidays, I say let him. But those who want to honor Martin Luther King or George Washington—*a fortiori*, those who want to worship Jesus of Nazareth—shouldn't allow their mode of commemoration to be established by political fiat or commercial interest. They should teach their children why these men are worth honoring and nurture their devotion privately (which is not to say individualistically), in their households, in their churches, with their friends. If these holidays become nothing more than excuses for a day off from work or for store-wide sales, then I'm with the abolitionists. cc

John Shelton Reed drives a 1980 Chevrolet Citation.

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

Things We Ought Not to Have Done

In the capital city of a state more conservative than many, in its mid-sized newspaper more conservative than not, runs a weekly feature called "Single File," of presumed interest to, yes, area singles (people, not cheese slices).

This week's article, "first in a series," was "Sex and Love Intermingle in the 80's." Titillated by the title (Had they never intermingled before? Would we be able to watch?), I was disappointed in the rest of the story. I wondered how the author's husband felt about her enthusiastic account of her latest reading matter: "To expect more from love, like promises and futures, is 'bizarre and inappropriate.'"

Then, at the end, the teaser for next week's installment crept into view: "Etiquette for the Sleepover Date," with the "Drop Us a Line" box asking, "What ideas do you have on sleepover dating? Is leaving your house with toothbrush in hand too obvious? Should children be ushered off to Grandma's house for the night?"

Now, I'm not old, except to the solicitous, down-cheeked male carry-out persons at the Super Valu, and I like to think I'm *realistic*. Whims of the flesh are not alien to me, nor is the recurring wish for slightly less responsibility in this life. Still, I've spent a sizable part of my life being ashamed, or trying to act in such a way that I wouldn't be ashamed, or at least trying not to get *caught*, and suddenly I'm a 32-year-old Edsel.

Shame is out; positive attitude is in, is everything, in fact. A local doctor friend, when I said that a group of us were guilty of letting another friend shoulder too much responsibility in a certain matter ("guilty" meaning "we're doing it; let's stop doing it"), silenced me by announcing, "Guilt is the world's most useless and destructive emotion." I'd always found it eminently useful: when I had it, it kept me from smoking (or at least enjoying) the cigarettes I swiped from my mother; from skipping gym class; from tormenting my brother (who was always asking for it). I refrained from more than I thought fair, for fear all hell would break loose at home. I trod the line between good and evil, and it was neither subtle nor narrow (although I liked to think it both); my difficulties lay only in my occasional narcoleptic plunges off the wrong side. ("You weren't *guilty*; you were just afraid of being punished," some have said, and *that*, to me, is a subtle and narrow distinction.)

But all hell never breaks loose any more. Do you sleep around? (Strange that the up-front people who *do* would use such a coy euphemism.) It's the healthiest thing in the world, like jogging: you work up a sweat and grimace a lot, but feel *great* when it's over. Do you abuse your child? That's a learned behavior, and if someone tries to tell you it's a "sin" you can haul him to court and win. Do you steal? You're a victim of the crass, incessant materialism in the lousy world you're forced to inhabit (never mind that your nine brothers and sisters live happy, productive lives). Do you have sex with persons of your own gender, or with cocker spaniels, or with hot roast-beef sandwiches (hold the mashed potatoes)? Normalcy is relative, and if queerness is normal for *you*, that's all that matters.

Not only is there nothing to hide any more, you are suspect if you don't *proclaim* your proclivities. To act as if you love your wife when you're longing to get her daughter (or son) in the sack; to act as if you're still a virgin at 19 when you're not, or as if you don't wake up in a different bed every Saturday morning; to act as if you're sorry for the shaky life you've bequeathed your three illegitimate children: all this can make a person awfully nervous and resentful. Guilt and embarrassment went the way of bundling, signs of a damaged id; restraint is the only unnatural act. Be what you are, and shout what you have done. All feelings are equal, but some are more equal than others. Propriety is hypocrisy.

It's just that my very naturalness is what *makes* me so ashamed.

The General Confession contained in the Morning Prayer service in the old Episcopal Book of Common Prayer read, in part, "We have left undone those things which we ought

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to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; *and there is no health in us.*" (The last seven words do not exist in the 1979 revision, which an Episcopal friend, one of the best men I know, found an improvement. "Thinking like that is self-defeating," he said. "It makes it sound as if we can't ever *be* any better than we are." Wellll . . .) The General Confession of Holy Communion in the old book, and in Rite I in the new (used for eight-o'clock low-church diehards), contains the lines, "We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable."

No other phrases in the services fly from my tongue as instinctively as these. The Apostles' and Nicene creeds are intricate and logical and vaguely incomprehensible to me, although I *try* to be saying the truth about what I believe when I say them; but these confessions are painful and immediate, compound fractures of my would-be private life, newly eloquent each week with my most recent tears and same old fretful remorses. There *is* no health in me; I *will* never get better. Attribute this to any theological or scientific cause you like, but call it the human condition.

What I'd like to read about more often, I think, is the acknowledgment of: (a) a little more shame; and (b) the sometime appropriateness of "hypocrisy," which is often just good manners. Date whatever kind of fauna you find attractive, but don't try to make us think perversion is enlightenment. Mankind has known better for millennia. Let off a little steam on Friday nights, but take the children to Grandma's first and tell her you'll be working late at the office; she'll appreciate the effort at pretense. Raise your illegitimate child, or give it up for adoption, but don't ask me to *pay* you for it, or act as if a one-parent home is the best of all possible worlds. Have the good grace to blush and avert your eyes once in a while. God knows we've all earned *that* privilege. cc

Jane Greer edits and publishes Plains Poetry Journal.

Psychology Today, Psychology Tomorrow, Psychology Forever

Psyche haunted the Romantic poets and their successors. Coleridge celebrated "the butterfly the ancient Grecians made the soul's fair emblem and its only name." Coleridge was a Christian. But the pagan Keats, in his search for a private "system of Salvation," said his prayers to Psyche, "latest-born and loveliest vision far / Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy." Keats conceded that Psyche had previously been honored by "no shrine, no grave, no oracle, no heat / Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming." But as a naturalized and humanized deity, the goddess provided the ideal inspiration for his own devoted efforts to create "the wreath'd trellis of a working brain" and "all soft delight / That shadowy thought can win."

It has been a century and a half since Keats implored the new deity to let him be her "priest" and "choir," and still the reincarnated Psyche reigns over much of what's left of English-speaking culture. Now, psychologists have taken over from the poets as her priests, while popular journalists fill the choirs that echo the oracular pronouncements. Keats's verse is not to everyone's taste, but it is preferable to the prose of Rollo May and all the rest of the "self-actualizing" hedonism of *Psychology Today*.

An unruly child of the counterculture and the New Left of the 1960's, *Psychology Today* has, from the very first, taken its religious responsibilities seriously. Already in its second year (1969) they were observing that psychology must help man "face our own inner experiences without the guidance of traditional dogmas, ritual, or patriarchal authority—the foundation stones of Judeo-Christian religious experience. Left without collectively sanctioned God-values and moral absolutes, we are compelled to erect our own morality, arrive at our own faith and belief, and discover the meaning of our own existence." In *Love and Will*, published the same year in *PT*, Rollo May declared that "we have bid goodbye to the theologians at the wake for our dead God." Now the challenge for May and his colleagues was to help others overcome the anxieties caused by abandoning "the belief in immortality that armored our ancestors." Four years later, in a chapter of *Without Guilt and Justice*, published in *PT*, Walter Kaufmann rejoiced in the decline of the belief that "moral views . . . are simply part of being Jewish, Christian, or, say, Hindu." Only such a religious decline allowed for people to become "autonomous individuals" who repudiate "craving for community" as "regressive" and "inauthentic."

The fallen clerics of psychology divide into numerous contending sects, but the celebrities all agree on man's complete freedom to erect a personal morality meaning on the ruins of traditional religion. The realm of the supernatural cannot be entirely discounted—so long as table-rapping is taken seriously. A 1969 *PT* feature highlighted Duke's parapsychology lab, whose director explained that he was only led to explore "the strange, special dimensions of the human mind" after his "religion had crumbled." "Some day," Rhine insisted, "religion will come to the laboratory." (Test-tube transubstantiation?) Four years later, *PT* again took a look at parapsychology with an extended interview with Stanley Krippner on telepathy, precognition, and the Bermuda Triangle. Krippner admitted that most scientists believe "parapsychology is all nonsense," but what psychologist could resist the expansive freedom of "altered states of consciousness"?

Admittedly, many psychologists are

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skeptical about parapsychology. But it will take more than doubts about Tarot cards and ESP to turn psychology into a science. If there is a unifying principle, it is probably the blank slate. But even that little would be vigorously disputed by cognitive psychologists whose experiments seem to indicate that the mind works only in some ways and not in others; ethologists whose study of behavior is increasingly inclined towards evolutionary biology; and, of course, orthodox Freudians.

At one time, Freud provided a central orthodoxy to the field. His name is still reverenced by *PT* contributors for his pioneering assault upon an "objectivistic, alienated, market-place culture" and for his bold unmasking of the sexual impulses hidden behind "Victorian prudishness." But Freud's definition of the sex drive as a primal compulsion, sublimated in culture and in the superego, put too many constraints upon human nature for the free-spirited psychologists at *PT*. In 1969, Rollo May protested in *PT* against "the complete determinism for which Freud argued." May also rejected "Freud's pessimistic death wish," called into question "Freud's use of science as a monastery," and dismissed sublimation as "Freud's most puritanical belief." Orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis "plays into modern man's tendency to surrender his autonomy" and leaves too little room for "imagination," "intentionality," and "interpersonal meaning." "It rests on the individual to choose the values of sexual experience," May believed, and psychoanalysis "can never carry the burden for value decisions that change a person's life."

Orthodox Freudians are not the only psychologists under attack in *PT* for positing a limited human nature. In 1969 *PT* blasted Arthur Jensen for promulgating "socially dangerous ideas" with his research suggesting a link between IQ and heredity. Just last year, *PT* branded supporters of a "constitutional-organic" explanation of mental illness as "conservatives" and issued a bull of excommunication. In 1973, *PT* reduced the findings of neuropsychology to the single conclusion that "human beings are varied, complex, and poorly understood." Psychologists who profess belief in "innate" patterns of thinking and speaking—including some cognitive psychologists—are categorized as "nativists" in another piece the same year and are scolded for failing to understand that what they call "innate" is really just "easily learned." (Walking on your feet isn't innate—just easier to learn than the alternatives.)

Of course, because many environmental influences try to assign limits —legal, social, moral—to human behavior, silencing the "nativist" psychologists is not enough. *PT*'s editors and contributors can hardly restrain their rage against a society which takes the pristine blank slate of the individual, breaks off huge chunks, then writes inhibiting messages on what's left. In an altogether typical article in 1973, *PT* ridiculed the "simplistic 'law and order' view that social conflicts are caused by deviant individuals who are unable to 'fit in.'" Criminal behavior is only a "countercultural" protest. One regular reader drew the obvious conclusion in a 1969 letter: Perry Smith (the brutal murderer depicted in *In Cold Blood*) committed his crimes

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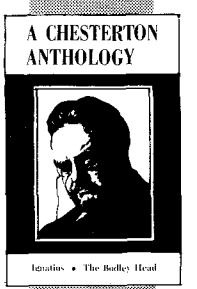

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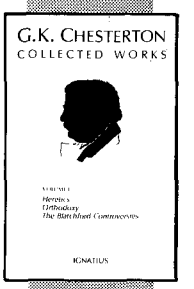

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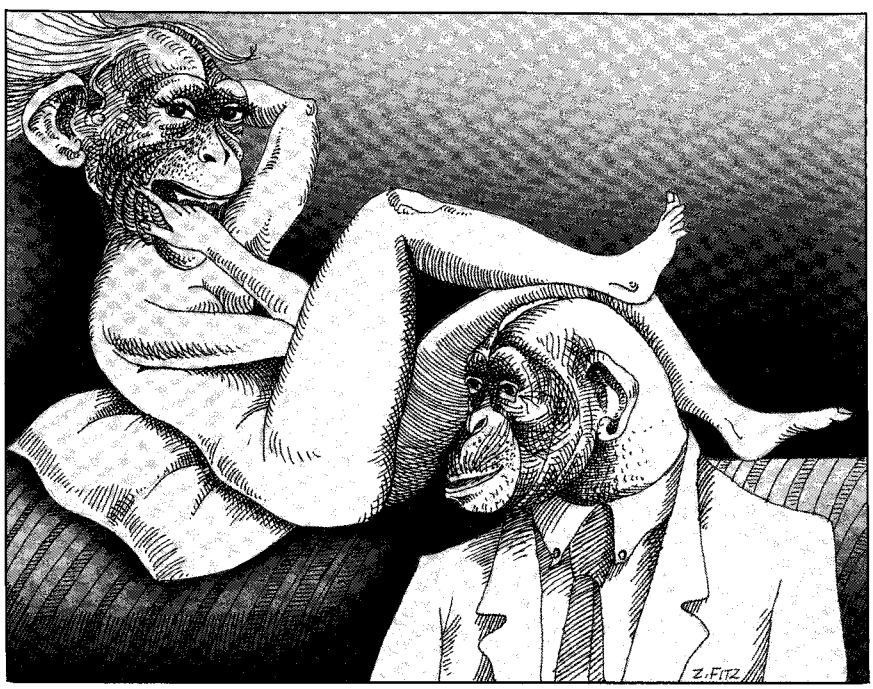
"because of what people did to him, so that he found no release sexually or artistically and thus became a menace to himself and to the society that created him."

PT contributors still occasionally invoke "social principles and values" and stigmatize individual violence as "antisocial," though readers would be hard put to identify the society whose values are being defended. Certainly it is not the *existing* American society, under constant assault in *PT* for repressing individual creativity with its racism, sexism, puritanism, and traditionalism. With predictable regularity, contributors denounce "our bourgeois industrialized society," "our representative society," and our "Victorian culture."

Though Black contributors almost never appear in its pages, *PT* has frequently editorialized against the effects of oppressive white dominance in retarding the social and psychological development of Blacks. A 1973 article argued that only invidious prejudice holds the number of interracial marriages in America so low. It's a nice bit of subtle racism: whites are so obviously superior that Blacks are desperate to marry up.

Other *PT* contributors take aim at male chauvinism, female stereotypes, and sex-typing. Sexual identity, like every other fact of human nature, must be fluid and open to change. A typical 1978 piece analyzed "the sexist world of the toy store," while another looked at the troubling cultural "faceism" that causes young children as well as magazine editors to emphasize a man's face in pictures but a woman's body. (There are words for men who like to look at pictures of other men's bodies, but they don't use them at *PT*.)

By the early 70's the *he/she* had arrived. In his 1973 piece in praise of individual autonomy, Kaufmann attacked most "movements" as dubious quasi-religion, the predictable exception being the women's movement: "There was a real need for concerted action and no need whatever for any women who approved of this 'movement' to use it to avoid autonomy." They've gone so far off the deep end that when a contributor recently published a study of "children in their natural habitat," he looked exclusively at "a local day-care center." In the same vein, a recent editorial welcomed a drop in the fertility rate as evidence of increased sexual equality. If only men quit looking at pictures of female bodies and did their fair share in bearing children!



Not that *PT* wants to reduce the birthrate by turning female readers into Shakers or nuns. They've been in the vanguard of "the sexual revolution" since its inception. "Sexual issues," declared a contributor in 1969, "are so much more in the open that the gulf between what is permissible to discuss and what is permissible to do seems to grow narrower and narrower." In a 1969 survey of the readers, *PT* editors indicated what *they* thought was permissible to discuss and presumably to do: "Have you had sexual relations with more than one person at a time?" "How often have you engaged in extramarital intercourse during the past year?" "Over the past six months, how often have you masturbated?" And despite reports of a "new chastity" among the young, the sexual revolution continues at *PT*, where just last year a new survey revealed that almost half of their readers are adulterers. (Hilariously, *U.S. News & World Report* took this as evidence of changing mores in America.) No wonder that sandwiched in between the numerous liquor ads and the less frequent promotions for the Rosecrucians and for Jonathan Livingston Seagull medallions are countless ads for sex-technique manuals and companion volumes filled with "the best pick-up techniques known."

In its animus against all restraints on the sex drive, *PT* helped pave the way to the removal of homosexuality from the official list of psychological disorders in 1973. By 1978, contributors were lamenting the unfair prejudice against gays, were exploring the "unique problems" of this life-style, and were explaining the need for grade schoolers to meet "a responsible gay role model." Of late, *PT* has been bemoaning the plight of gay AIDS victims.

In recent issues, *PT* has also bewailed the ways in which our "drug-drenched society encourages us to seek out chemicals to solve many of our problems." Never mind *PT*'s own fascination in the late 60's with "exploring new worlds through drugs." Never mind that in 1973 *PT* minimized the "heroin problem," saying that "biologically, heroin is actually one of the least threatening drugs. . . . Contrary to popular belief, heroin causes no apparent tissue damage, little impairment of judgment or coordination, and no inclination to engage in violent behavior. It is not necessarily addictive." Never mind, too, *PT*'s recent study of the "images that result from using psychedelic drugs" or the con-

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stant drumbeat of support for the legalization of marijuana.

PT does see at least one real danger in drug use: drugs, a contributor warned in 1973, can serve to "soothe and eliminate tensions that otherwise would produce beneficial social changes." What kind of beneficial social changes? A 1969 article with the revealing title "The Building of Nations" gave away the game when it denounced those family patterns "that lead to dogmatism, traditionalism, authoritarianism, and dependence on the older generation. Child-rearing practices can . . . produce adults who are fatalistic, willing to accept the world as it is. . . . Such personality traits . . . inhibit social change."

The obvious solution is an educational revolution: schools that "compel . . . judge . . . mandate . . . [or] discriminate" must be replaced with schools that "promote creativity, egalitarianism, [and] flexibility," schools that largely ignore tradition and are "oriented toward the future." But in the same year (1973) *PT* rejected the notion that "schools . . . by themselves [can] close economic inequalities." What is needed is "political control over the economic institutions that shape our society" and "a comprehensive incomes policy." "Psychology and politics are converging," suggested a 1978 article. A 1985 *PT* essay argues that because of an epidemic of "mental illness" affecting 40 million Americans (just how many registered Republicans *are* there?), "prevention" is the only cure, achieved "through guaranteed employment," through "assertiveness training," and through "social change" to help "women and minorities of all kinds."

Just how far politics as psychology can go was illustrated in 1971 when the president of the American Psychological Association proposed that psychologists be permitted to administer behavior modification drugs to the nation's elected and military leaders to reverse their "nonadaptive primitive aggression impulses." *PT* was worried that this might lead to "manipulation of the masses" and thought that "perhaps the country is not ready" for that yet. Not to worry, though, look how far *PT* had advanced political discussion in just five years of publication. Another slightly premature idea put forward in *PT* in 1973 was the proposal that parents be licensed to have children only upon demonstrating a sound understanding of "behavior development," "principles of reinforcement," "stimulus-control generalization," and other truths dispensed by psychologists. Nonlicensed couples would be subject to "mandatory birth-control": "We can no longer afford the luxury of allowing any two fools to add to our numbers whenever they please."

In 1984, *PT* reported that the dream of licensing parents has now been partly realized, with psychologists gaining authority in some states to act as "gatekeepers" in matters of artificial insemination, "turning away people who might not be good parents." In the late 1970's, psychologists in Ontario sought to forbid "the practice of psychology" to anyone without a Ph.D. in psychology—with special exemptions allowed for government social workers, teachers, and clergymen of main-line denominations. A Canadian philosopher quoted in *PT* interpreted this as an attempt to gain "the status of a 'state church' in matters of the mind."

At first glance, it might appear that psychologists' repudiation of all extant social order and communal norms stands in contradiction to their quest for political and cultural power. But it's a trick at least as old as Hobbes (himself an important psychological theorist): first, find or create a state of anarchy, confusion, or "mental illness"; then, set up the absolute monarchy needed to establish order. Behind all of *PT*'s heated attacks on "confidence in the superiority of modern Western man" as "a translation of the Cold War spirit into psychological terms," there lurks an unacknowledged attraction to the totalitarians of China and the Soviet Union. And why not? Not only were Mao and Stalin staunch defenders of the complete plasticity of human nature, they were past masters of group therapy. (BC) ∞

Successful Crimes

(continued from page 9)

after experience and common sense had discredited much of their theoretical assumptions.

What does any or all of this have to do with compensating the victims of violent crimes? Very simply this: we have turned over our most ancient and fundamental human privilege—self-defense—to a loosely organized conspiracy of experts and professionals who refuse to make the common distinction between normal and abnormal, right and wrong. Now that the "professionals" have demonstrated their utter incapacity to control the criminal classes, we are ready to surrender to them even more power, the power to make restitution. We do this, we say, out of compassion. If we really wanted to prevent lunatic killers like David Berkowitz or Charles Manson from capitalizing on their brutality, we would have done to them what any other society in the history of the world would have done: execute them. If we really cared about the sufferings of innocent people in America, we would not for one moment consider turning loose the swarm of rapists, child molestors, and armed robbers who infest our city streets. There is a particle of truth in the Marquis of Halifax's observation that, "Men are not hang'd for stealing horses, but that horses may not be stolen," although it is dangerous to base execution solely on deterrence—as opposed to punishment. But Halifax redeems his reputation for political wisdom by going on to add, "Whenever a knave is not punished, an honest man is laughed at." For every murderer we execute, we save an estimated eight lives—the sum of his potential victims plus murders deterred by execution. The number would probably go much higher for rapists. Our continued refusal to do the right thing can only be the result of cowardice and a callous indifference to what happens to the victims of crime. By turning over the entire business to criminologists, social workers, and psychologists, we think we have discharged our responsibility, when all we have actually done is wash our hands. No amount of restitution or professional counseling will be enough to purge our collective guilt.

—Thomas Fleming

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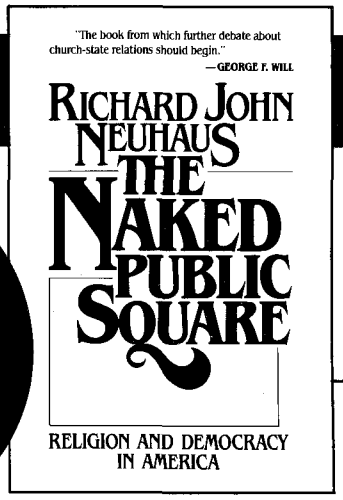
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